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EDITOR'S LETTER

This issue of *Gardens Illustrated* celebrates the individuality of things, from beautifully planted private spaces to bespoke design and handcrafted objects.

Tithe Barn in north Norfolk is the private garden of garden designer Emily Erlam who also runs a busy central London practice. Emily's plan for her own garden was to make a space that was very plant-focused but not so intensely planted that she couldn't look after it herself. An evolving palette of pinks, reds and yellows that work beautifully with the brickwork of the house, new plants are nurtured initially before being allowed to fend for themselves. Think *Sanguisorba officinalis*, *Achillea* 'Terracotta', *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' and *Molinia caerulea*. A wide porch that extends out from the house makes the garden an all-weather space. The tall planting, positioned close to the house, feels wonderfully immersive.

The garden of botanist Robyn Reeves in Tenterden, Kent, has been designed with unerring attention to detail. Foliage underpins the planting that includes generous drifts of *Thuja occidentalis* and *Hakonechloa macra* that swirl beneath multi-stemmed trees. Considered use of materials, including local clay pavers and bespoke oak furniture are designed to weather and last. The garden includes a handcrafted oak bench by the artist Alison Crowther that adds a subtle, sculptural element.

Should all public buildings have a garden? Critic Tim Richardson considers the impact of a park surrounding a tax office in the northern Dutch city of Groningen on those who live and work nearby. Designed by Amsterdam-based landscape architect Lodewijk Baljon, it includes inspired planting as well as popular walking and cycling routes. Good design is about people.

For gardeners with smaller outside spaces, there are four beautiful small gardens in this issue, including a contemporary, minimalist garden, designed by Matt Keightley, using conifers, and in north London, a garden of a recently converted Salvation Army hall has been designed to look as beautiful when seen from inside the house as out.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

Lucy Bellamy

LUCY BELLAMY, EDITOR

CLAIRE TAKACS

Designer Lodewijk Baljon has created a people-centered park around this tax office in Groningen, page 54.

CONTENTS

AUGUST 2018

Plants

22 **Plantsman's favourites** Plantswoman Fleur van Zonneveld selects her favourite plants for August

46 **Plant profile: dianthus** A recent convert to old-fashioned pinks, John Hoyland selects 13 of the best

Places

34 **Let it rain** In her Norfolk garden designer Emily Erlam has created a colourful and constantly evolving garden she and her family can enjoy whatever the weather

40 **Blending in** On the edge of a wood in rural Kent, a garden designed by Marian Boswall for a botanist, merges beautifully with its surroundings

54 **A worker's escape** Good design is about people. Critic Tim Richardson considers a public garden in the northern Netherlands by Lodewijk Baljon

64 **Bright and beautiful** Ute and Albrecht Ziburski visited gardens all over Europe to find inspiration for their beautifully planted garden in northern Germany

Small gardens

74 **Eastern promise** A minimalist courtyard by Matt Keightley takes its inspiration from Asia

78 **Inside out** A contemporary garden for a London couple who love to entertain

82 **Private view** Form and good structure add layers of interest to a plantsman's paradise

86 **Added dimension** A garden of predominantly green plants adds Zen-like calm

People

62 **Who's who** The design duo of Isabel and Julian Bannerman on their creative collaboration

122 **Raising expectations** Will perfection in a raised lawn make the rest of Frank Ronan's garden seem impoverished in comparison?

Design

91 **Design update** Including a new major artwork for the National Trust at Runnymede and Dan Pearson's landscaping for a luxury hotel in China

96 **Design ideas** Designer Ula Maria explores how the Japanese philosophy of *wabi-sabi* can inform garden design

101 **Design sourcebook** Nine of the best outdoor grills

Regulars

3 **Editor's letter**

6 **Contributors**

11 **Dig in** This month: news of the designs for Oxford Botanic Garden's new Herbarium Room and a new exhibition at the Garden Museum

19 **Kitted out** for keeping gardens irrigated

28 **The Outsider** Horticulturist Hannah Gardner goes in search of orchids on the Estonian island of Sarremaa

31 **Gardening talent** Meet Megan Sharp, gardener at Lords of the Manor hotel in the Cotswolds

32 **Subscription offer** Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated*

109 **Books** New books, including *Dahlia* by Naomi Slade

113 **Crossword and how to buy back issues**

121 **Next issue** What's coming up in September

DIANNA JAZWINSKI

Dianthus plumarius is one of John Hoyland's recommended pinks, page 46

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SEE PAGE 32

COVER IMAGE

Emily Erlam's Norfolk garden by Rachel Warne

ON THE COVER

Expertly crafted,
pages 34, 40
54 hardworking plants,
pages 22, 34, 46, 54, 64
Small gardens, page 72
Dianthus, page 46
Fired up, page 101

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MODESTE HERWIG
Modeste shot the Gemma Diks-designed garden, page 86. *"I loved the atmosphere in this small city garden. The evening light strengthened the oriental style."*

ANDREW MONTGOMERY

BENJAMIN WILLIAM POPE
Benjamin visited a Sean Walter-designed garden with big ideas, page 82. *"Sean's clever use of design and planting work to create a garden that appears bigger than it is."*

STEPHANIE MOHAN
Stephanie loved a small garden by Matt Keightley, page 74. *"The Asian influence is unmistakable, but Matt's design nous creates a garden of restrained elegance."*

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JAMES BASSON
James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

FERGUS GARRETT
Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student and volunteer programmes at Dixter and through worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008.

ANNA PAVORD
Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent*'s gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

DAN PEARSON
Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show at Chelsea in 2015.

SARAH PRICE
Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who won worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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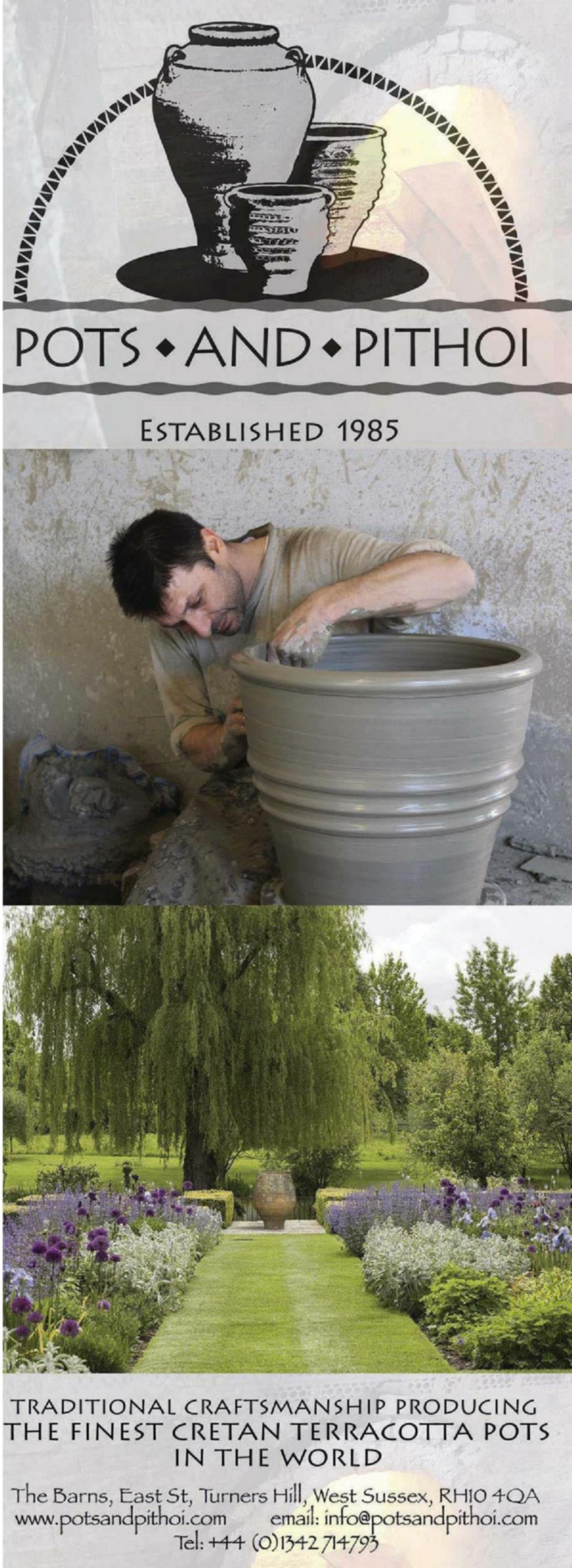

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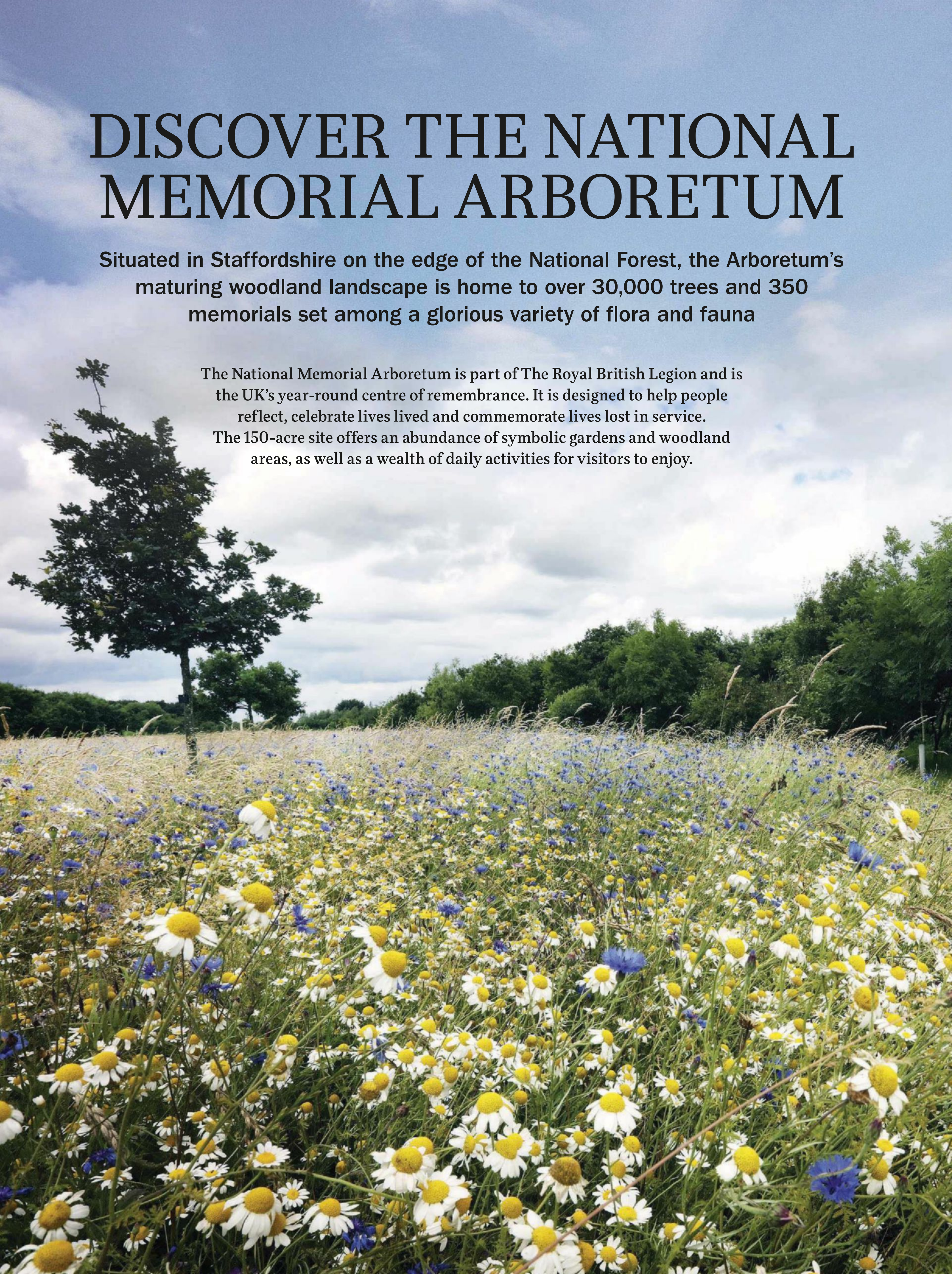
DISCOVER THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Situated in Staffordshire on the edge of the National Forest, the Arboretum's maturing woodland landscape is home to over 30,000 trees and 350 memorials set among a glorious variety of flora and fauna

The National Memorial Arboretum is part of The Royal British Legion and is the UK's year-round centre of remembrance. It is designed to help people reflect, celebrate lives lived and commemorate lives lost in service. The 150-acre site offers an abundance of symbolic gardens and woodland areas, as well as a wealth of daily activities for visitors to enjoy.



A PEACEFUL PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE AND INSPIRATION

REMEMBRANCE

The 350 memorials honour not just the military but also the emergency services and other organisations such as the Women's Institute, the Women's Land Army, Scouts, the RNLI and Salvation Army.

TAKE YOUR TIME

The Remembrance Centre features exhibition spaces, Gift Shop and restaurant. From here the stunning Boyes Garden leads visitors out into the site.

REAL STORIES

There's a story behind each of the thought-provoking memorials – each a work of art in itself. Take a guided tour or listen to a talk and be enthralled as the stories really come to life.

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM, DENIS COOK

INSPIRATION

The Arboretum is a wonderful place to visit for a calm, peaceful walk through the beautiful woodland. Wander down avenues remembering those who gave their lives, or just enjoy the variety of landscapes and gardens.

EXHIBITIONS

The fascinating *Landscapes of Life* exhibition explores how and why we remember. The *Thank You: Legacies of War* exhibition opens on 3 August and features the now everyday items whose development can be traced to the First World War.

The National Memorial Arboretum is open daily (except Christmas Day), 9am-5pm (dusk in winter). Entry is free but donations are welcomed.

A SELECTION OF SOME OF THE EVENTS COMING UP AT THE ARBORETUM

4 AUGUST
Proms at the Arboretum
As the sun begins to set over the grounds of the Arboretum, the Band of The Royal Anglian Regiment and other special guests will regale the audience with a rousing performance featuring a repertoire of traditional Proms favourites. The evening will finish with a fantastic firework finale.

DAILY UNTIL 11 NOVEMBER
Replica 1940s War Rooms Installation. Explore a 1940s RAF Command and Operations room and get ready for inspection in the billet room. Children can dress up, get into character and meet costumed interpreters (weekends until 30 September).

DAILY UNTIL 11 NOVEMBER
Flags for the Fallen
Decorate a small flag in a design of your own. Then, walk through the First World War commemoration, which features a large map of the UK, to place the tribute in an area that is special to you, or the person you are remembering.

22-23 SEPTEMBER
Autumn Festival
Celebrate all things autumn at a handmade food and traditional craft fair, plus join in a host of other activities taking place over the weekend.

20 OCTOBER
Twilight Trek
Visit as dusk falls for the annual Twilight Trek. This autumnal guided walk offers visitors the opportunity to experience and explore the Arboretum at its most atmospheric.

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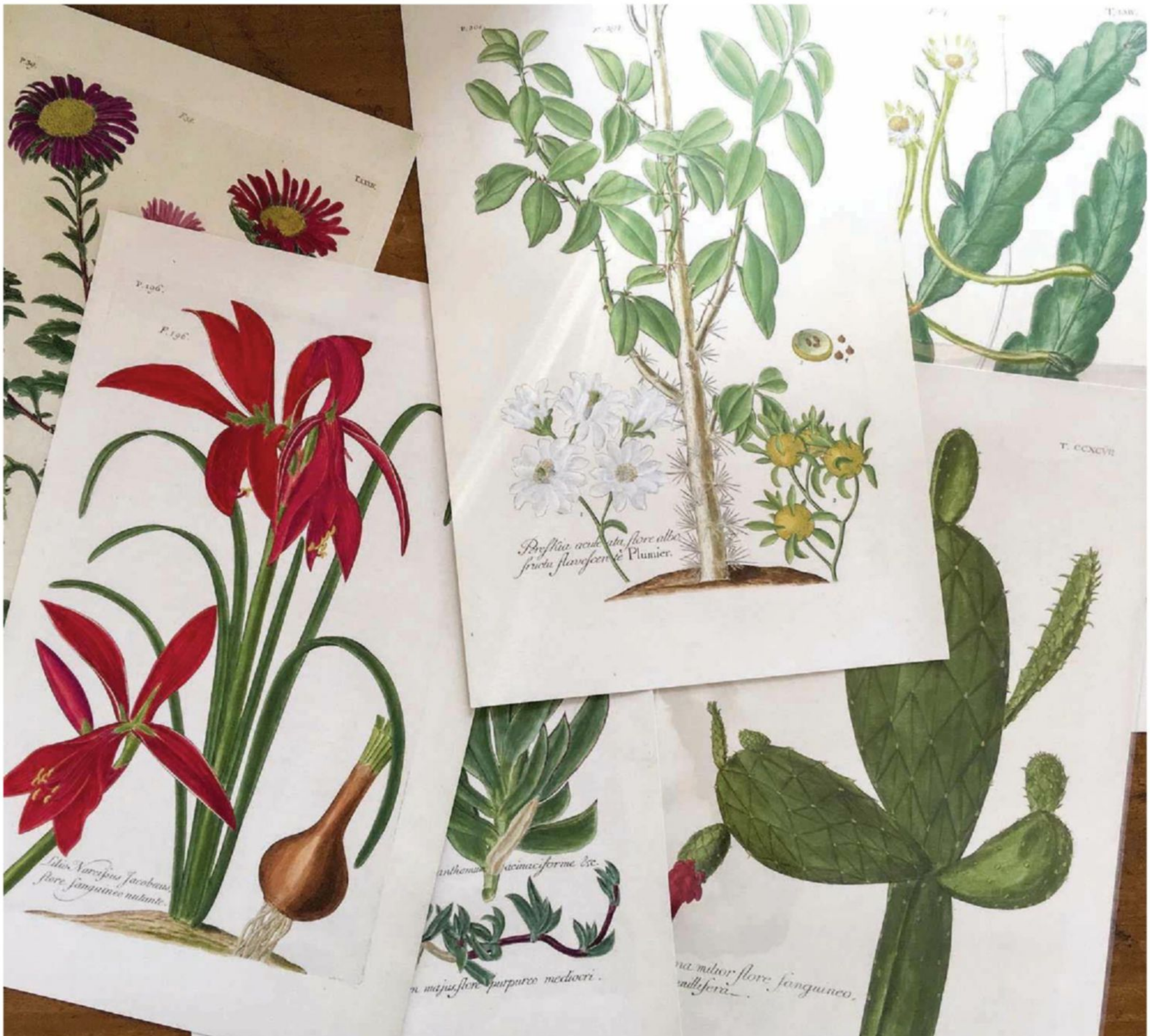
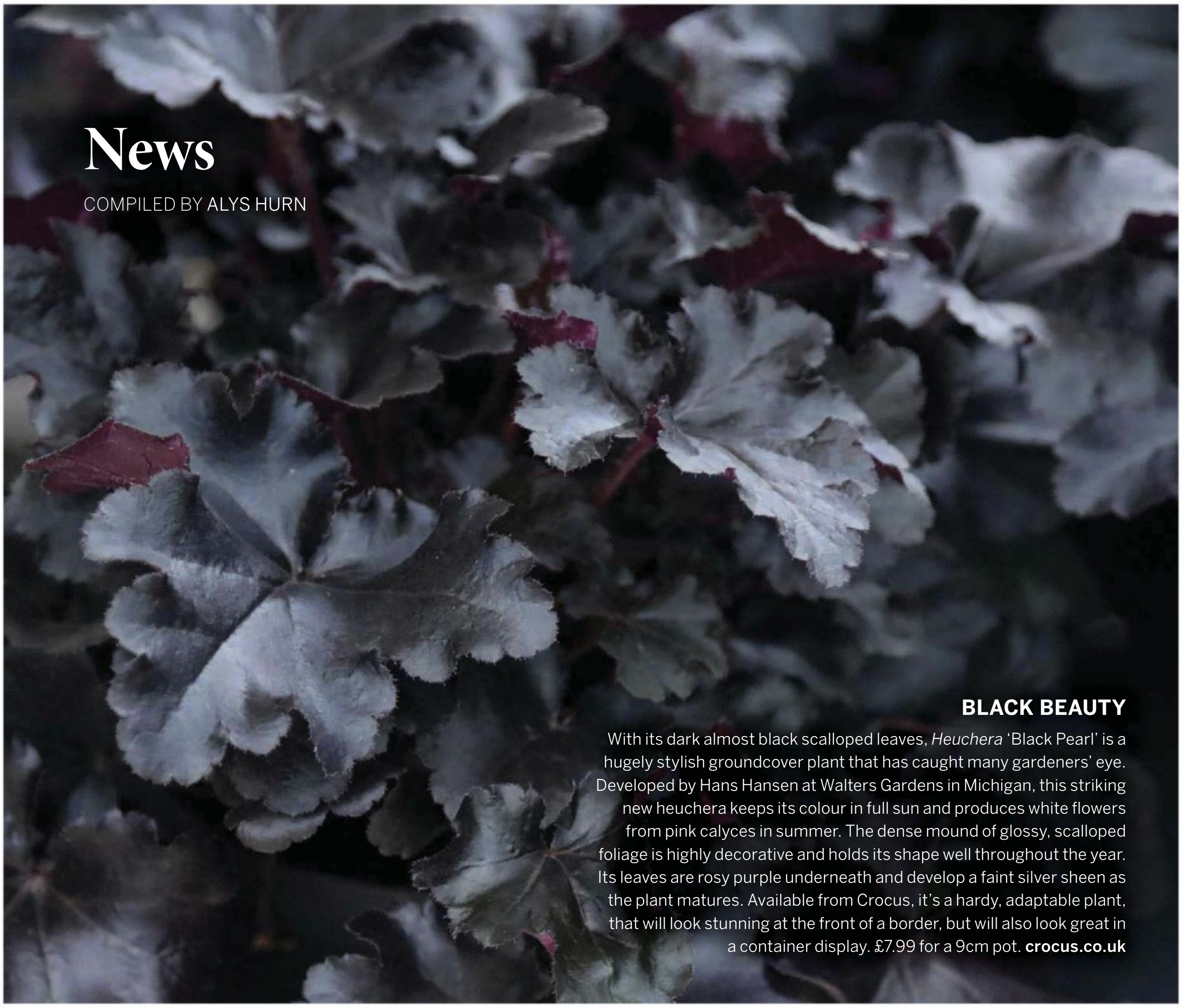


RICHARD HARDS, SAM IBBOTT

WONDER WALL

While working on his classification of plants, the 18th-century Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus would become so engrossed in his work he would cover the walls of his study with botanical prints. This ad hoc botanical wallpaper was the inspiration for the design by nature printer Pia Östlund (right) for the interior of a new Herbarium Room for Oxford Botanic Garden, which will display to the public some of the items held in the Oxford University Herbaria – many of which date back to the 17th century. Pia has lined the walls of the Herbarium Room with 246 glicée reproductions of prints from Johann Jakob Dillenius's 1732 book *Hortus Elthamensis* – a work that is doubly appropriate as not only was Dillenius a friend of Linnaeus, but he was also the first professor of botany at Oxford. The Herbarium Room opens in August. **obga.ox.ac.uk**



News

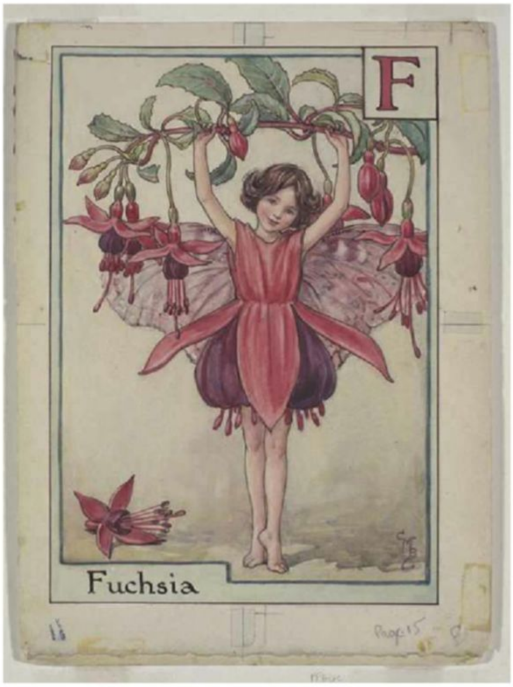
COMPILED BY ALYS HURN

BLACK BEAUTY

With its dark almost black scalloped leaves, *Heuchera* 'Black Pearl' is a hugely stylish groundcover plant that has caught many gardeners' eye. Developed by Hans Hansen at Walters Gardens in Michigan, this striking new heuchera keeps its colour in full sun and produces white flowers from pink calyces in summer. The dense mound of glossy, scalloped foliage is highly decorative and holds its shape well throughout the year. Its leaves are rosy purple underneath and develop a faint silver sheen as the plant matures. Available from Crocus, it's a hardy, adaptable plant, that will look stunning at the front of a border, but will also look great in a container display. £7.99 for a 9cm pot. **crocus.co.uk**

FAIRY MAGIC

Cicely Mary Barker's flower fairy illustrations have charmed generations of children, and to mark the centenary of the publication of Barker's Elves and Fairies postcards, the Garden Museum in London has put together an exhibition of her work. *Flower Fairies Botanical Magic* will feature original illustrations, including a rare set of the 1918 postcards, and artwork from all eight of Barker's *Flower Fairies* books. Favourites, such as the Fuchsia Fairy (right) from the 1934 book *Flower Fairy Alphabet*, will be on display, alongside sketchbooks and research materials that show the high degree of botanical accuracy in Barker's illustrations. The museum will also be running a series of family-friendly, fairy-focussed events. 8 August – 30 September. **gardenmuseum.org.uk**



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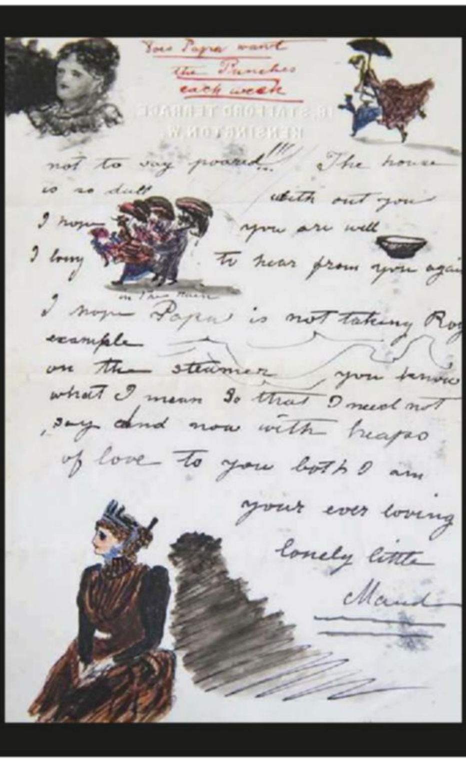
GLASSHOUSE GROWING

According to *Gardeners' Question Time* regular Matthew Biggs glasshouse gardening can benefit as much from careful and strategic planning as outdoor gardening. To help glasshouse gardeners get a head start Matthew is providing his expert advice on growing under glass in a new monthly online feature for heritage glasshouse manufacturer Hartley Botanic. 'Growing month-by-month' will cover everything from citrus fruits to overwintering, and provide in-depth advice to help gardeners maximise crop production. Matthew will also be sharing seasonal tips and ideas on topics, such as how to make the most of your space, and unusual planting suggestions. The first feature goes live on 19 July and then on the first of every month. **hartley-botanic.co.uk**

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

Nymans the Arts and Crafts garden in West Sussex was established in the 19th century by Ludwig Messel and later brought to great renown by his son Leonard. But, as a new exhibition at the house shows, the women of the Messel family also made significant contributions to the garden. Muriel Messel, Ludwig's youngest daughter, was a pupil of the gardener (and Nymans neighbour) William Robinson, and designed some of the mixed borders in the garden, which she referred to as 'a triumph of hope'. Leonard's wife Maud created Nymans' romantic rose garden and their daughter Anne, Countess of Rosse, was a keen garden designer. *Triumph of Hope: Women Gardeners at Nymans* looks at the legacy of all three women bringing together sketches, letters, diaries, photographs and paintings. Visitors can also explore the women's horticultural legacy in the garden, which holds several plants named for them. Until 28 October. **nationaltrust.org.uk**



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the Punches
each week

not to say pound!!! The house
is so dull with out you
I hope you are well
I long to hear from you agai
in this manner
I hope Papa is not taking Ro
example
on the steamer you know
what I mean So that I need not
say and now with heaps
of love to you both I am
your ever loving
lonely little
Maud

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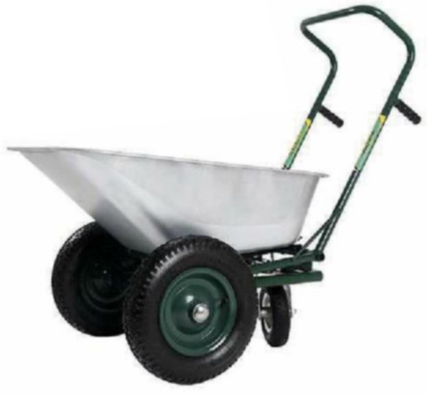

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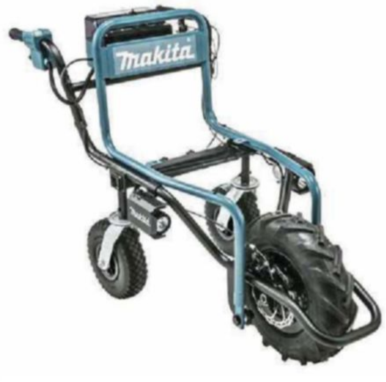

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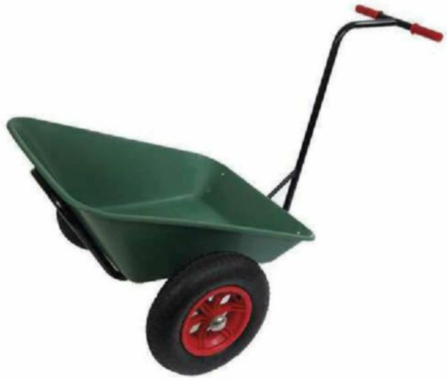

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DIARY

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❶ Photographic Exhibition
Bath-based photographer Rich Stapleton's exhibition *Botany* celebrates the sculptural forms of plants. The work is available to buy as prints from £250. Until 30 September. The Salon, Connolly, 4 Clifford Street, London W1S 2LG. Tel 020 7952 6708, connollyengland.com

❷ Secret Structures: Inside the story of Plants and Fungi
In this long-running exhibition, you can marvel at the amazing structures of plants and fungi and learn why it is important to protect them. 10am-3.30pm, daily. Free with garden admission. Millennium Seed Bank Atrium, Wakehurst Garden, Ardingly, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH17 6TN. Tel 01444 894066, kew.org/wakehurst

❸ Fruit for Smaller Gardens
Learn how to train fruit trees into a variety of forms suited to smaller gardens, plus the basics of summer pruning. 8 August, 11am-12.30pm. £25. RHS Garden Rosemoor, Great Torrington, Devon EX38 8PH. Tel 020 3176 5830, rhs.org.uk

❹ Great Comp Summer Show
Now in its 16th year, this annual event brings together multi-award-winning nurseries, including Edulis Nursery and Pineview Plants, plus local artists and craftsmen, for a weekend celebrating the joys of gardening. 11-12 August, 11am-5pm. £8. Great Comp Garden, Comp Lane, Platt, nr Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8QS. Tel 01732 885094, greatcompgarden.co.uk

❺ An Elixir of Letters talk and tour
Join sculptor Rachel Gundry for a talk on her work that's inspired by the plants used for teas, tisanes, wines and other herbal brews. The talk is followed by a tour of the *An Elixir of Letters* exhibition, showcasing the work of some of the UK's foremost letter carvers. 15 August, 2.30pm. Free with garden entry, but booking required. Chelsea Physic Garden, 66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS. Tel 020 7352 5646, chelseaphysicgarden.co.uk

❻ Lowther Garden Tours
Head gardener Martin Ogle leads a tour of late-summer planting at Lowther Castle Gardens. 16 August, 1.30pm. £12. Lowther Castle, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2HH. Tel 01931 712192, lowthercastle.org

❼ Walking in the Footsteps of 'Capability' Brown
A guided walk across the parkland at Scampston Hall, Yorkshire, which reveals the vistas created by the great landscape architect in 1773. 16 August, 1-2pm. £2 suggested donation. Meet at plant sales area 12.55pm, Scampston Hall, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 8NG. Tel 01944 759111, scampston.co.uk.

❽ Summer Vegetable Weekend
Barnsdale opens up its productive gardens, normally off limits to visitors, with advice from its expert grower on how to grow your own. Seasonal cooking demonstrations take place on Sunday. 18-19 August, 11am-4pm. Free with garden admission. Barnsdale Gardens, The Avenue, Exton, Oakham, Rutland LE15 8AH. Tel 01572 813200, barnsdalegardens.co.uk

❾ Surrey Sculpture Society Trail
The Surrey Sculpture Society's trail opens at RHS Wisley on 25 August. Contemporary and traditional pieces are installed throughout the garden and are available to buy. Until 23 September, 10am-6pm. Normal garden admission applies. RHS Wisley, Wisley Lane, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. Tel 01483 224234, rhs.org.uk

❿ Outdoor Kitchen Design
A one-day practical course on outdoor kitchen design by The Lapa Company at their outdoor kitchen at Borough Green, Kent TN15 8QU. 30 August. Tickets are £48, including lunch. Tel 01732 884030, thelapacompany.co.uk

⓫ Bee and Pollination Festival
Join experts and bee-keeping enthusiasts for a weekend of talks, demonstrations and live hives. Pollinator-friendly plants will be on sale. 1-2 September, 10am-5pm. University of Bristol Botanic Garden, The Holmes, Stoke Park Road, Stoke Bishop, Bristol BS9 1JG. Tel 0117 928 9000, bristol.ac.uk/botanicgarden

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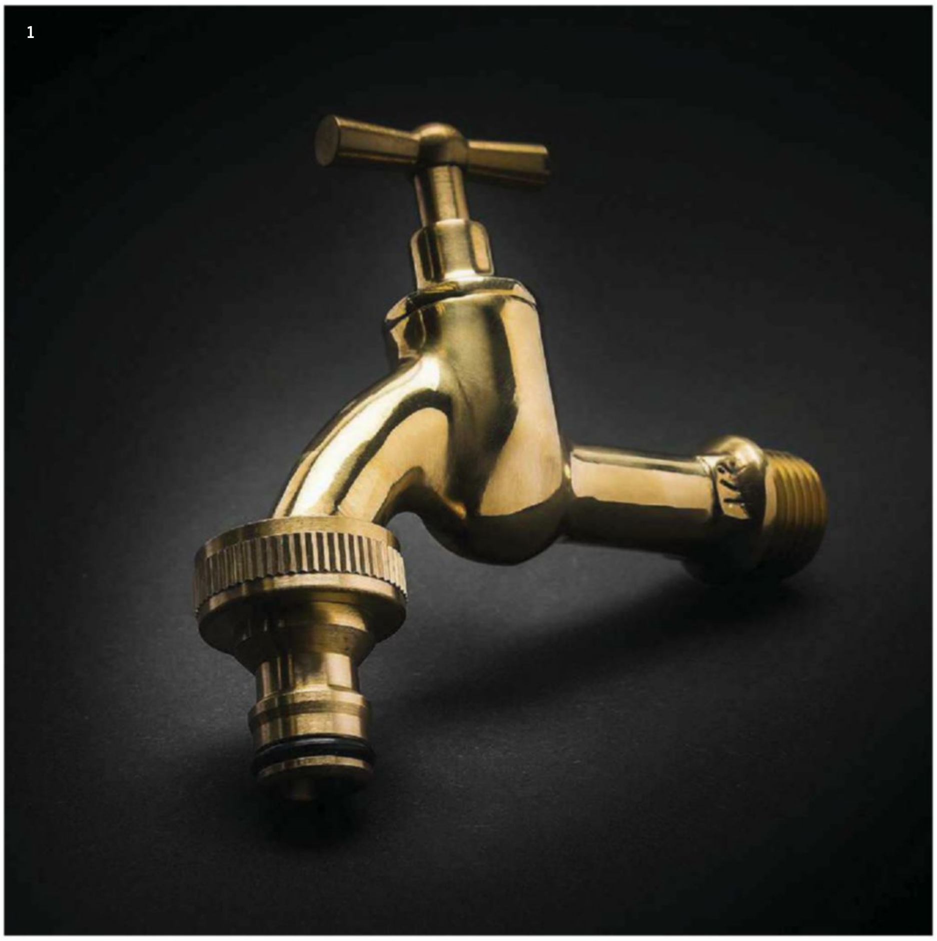

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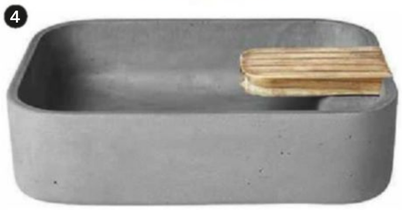

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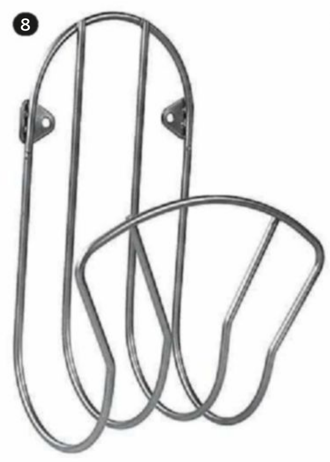

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1. Brass Water-Tap, £17.50, 0800 096 0938, manufactum.co.uk **2. Perl Hose,** £36, 0800 096 0938, manufactum.co.uk **3. Brass Mister,** £14.95, 0345 092 0283, sarahraven.com **4. Blomus Pool Bird Bath,** £57, 01986 781663, naken.co.uk **5. DW355N Deluxe Multi Pattern Spray Gun,** £20.99, 01753 547790, darlac.com for stockists **6. Rain Gauge,** £74, +45 (0)36 73 20 60, evasolo.com **7. Noblesse Decorative Water Butt, 275 litre, in granite,** £297.49, 01462 429 720, waterbuttwarehouse.co.uk **8. Nyby Hose Hanger,** £5.49, 020 8247 9300, clasohlson.com

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1. Small Round Fine Spray Rose, £12.99, 0121 420 2494, haws.co.uk **2. Alba Krapf Iron-Man Hose Trolley,** £165.41, amazon.co.uk **3. Brass Sprinkler Head,** £15.50, and **Zamak Sprinkler Base,** £38, 0800 096 0938, manufactum.co.uk **4. Verve Capillary Matting Sheets,** £3.87 each, 0333 014 3357, diy.com **5. Ecopots Saucer in white grey**, from £4.95 for 21cm x 2.5cm, 01872 575000, shop.ashortwalk.com **6. Waterfall Watering Can in slate, 5 litre,** £27.99, 0114 233 8262, burgonandball.com **7. DW205 Adjustable Tripod,** £15.99, 01753 547790, darlac.com for stockists **8. Self-Watering Flowerpot,** £42, +45 (0)36 73 20 60, evasolo.com

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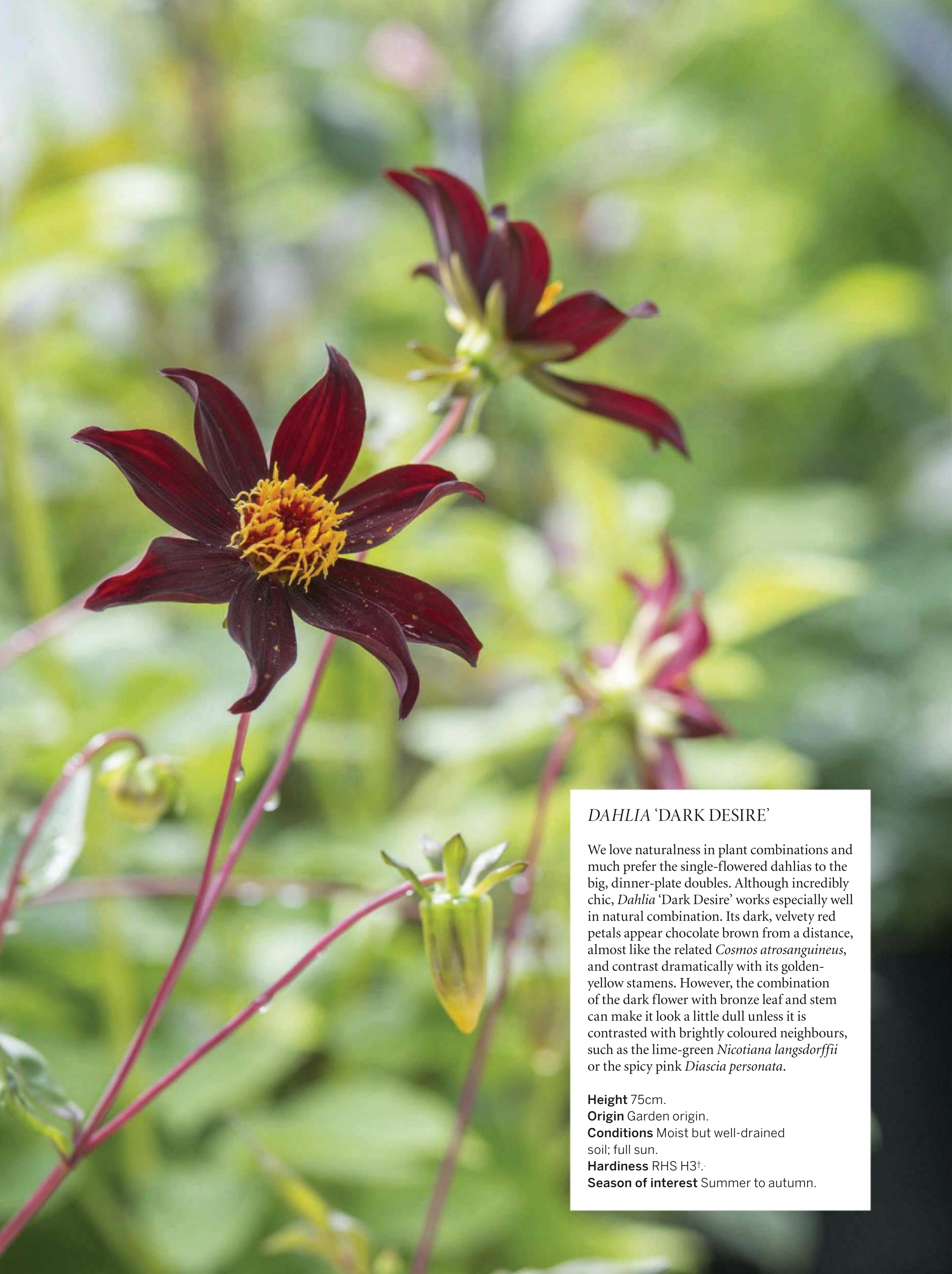


DAHLIA 'DARK DESIRE'

We love naturalness in plant combinations and much prefer the single-flowered dahlias to the big, dinner-plate doubles. Although incredibly chic, *Dahlia* 'Dark Desire' works especially well in natural combination. Its dark, velvety red petals appear chocolate brown from a distance, almost like the related *Cosmos atrosanguineus*, and contrast dramatically with its golden-yellow stamens. However, the combination of the dark flower with bronze leaf and stem can make it look a little dull unless it is contrasted with brightly coloured neighbours, such as the lime-green *Nicotiana langsdorffii* or the spicy pink *Diascia personata*.

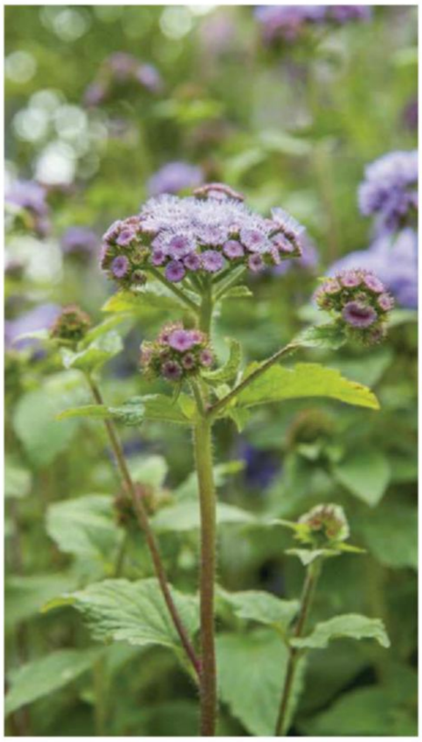
Height 75cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3†.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

Fleur van Zonneveld runs the Dutch nursery De Kleine Plantage. **dekleineplantage.nl**

AUGUST PLANTS

A gentian-blue salvia, a favourite French marigold and a late-flowering, delicate, pink umbellifer are among Fleur's choices for the peak of summer

WORDS FLEUR VAN ZONNEVELD PHOTOGRAPHS MAAYKE DE RIDDER



AGERATUM HOUSTONIANUM 'DONDOSCHNITTPERLE'

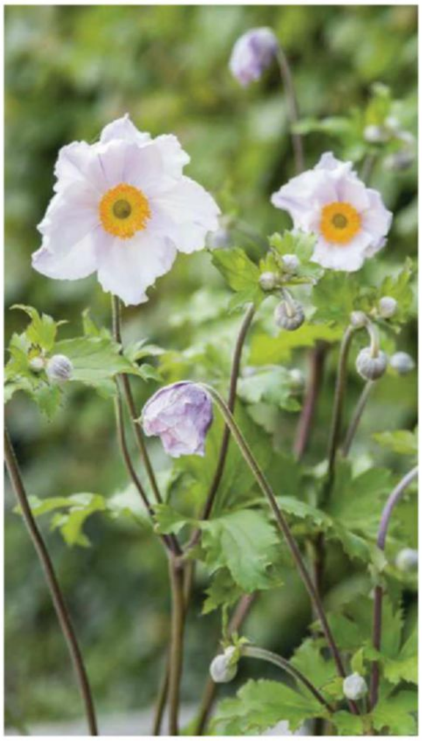
Several breeders have tried to turn the long-stemmed *Ageratum houstonianum* into monster bedding plants, but the results have not always been great. This cultivar, however, is the exception. Its soft blue-purple buds in small umbels fit beautifully into our borders, and will also grow in shade. At Hermannshof in Germany, several square metres of the blue ageratum have been planted under a broad spreading *Malus* x *floribunda*, where earlier in the year the ground was blue with forget-me-nots. Heavenly.

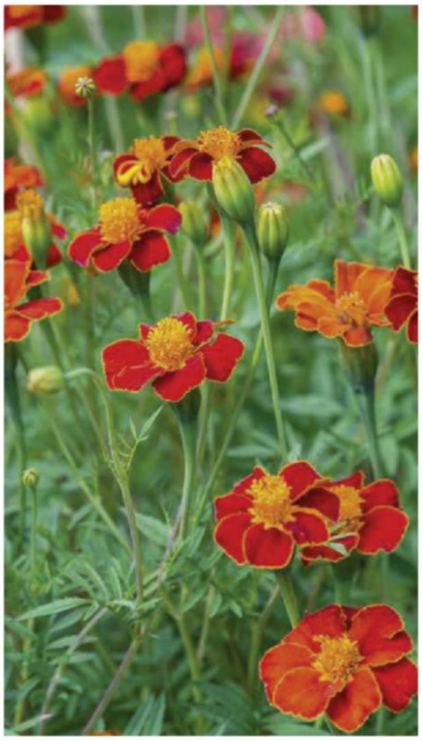
Height 80cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun and shade.
Hardiness RHS H2.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

ANEMONE 'DREAMING SWAN'

Elizabeth MacGregor's *Anemone* Wild Swan (= 'Macane001') was the eye-catching RHS Chelsea Flower Show Plant of the Year in 2011, but we had problems growing it in our garden. This seedling of Wild Swan has the same large, beautiful, semi-double white flowers with a soft-lilac streak on the back of the petals, but is very healthy and vigorous. Like all of MacGregor's Swan series – which also includes 'Elfin Swan', 'Dainty Swan' and 'Ruffled Swan' – it is not invasive and fits well into naturalistic plantings.

Height 60cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Summer.





TAGETES 'CINNABAR'

Just as chefs have their signature dish, so nurserymen and women have their signature plant, and this single-flowered, warm-orange tagetes is ours. It has everything we would could want in an annual plant – a beautiful, vivid colour, natural appearance, it's easy to grow and to combine with perennials, has a long and abundant flowering period and works well in a pot. One of our trainees brought us the seed from Great Dixter, where it was known as 'Dixter Strain'. In the Netherlands it is often sold under the incorrect name of *T. patula* Linnaeus.

Height 60cm.
Origin Garden origin.
Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H2.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

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SALVIA PATENS 'GUANAJUATO'

Plants that have been introduced from subtropical Mexico always provide plenty of colour and spectacle to our cooler climate. This salvia, found by Jamie Compton, John d'Arcy and Martyn Rix in the Sierra de Guanajuato in 1991, is no exception. It's tall with large flowers that are an unlikely but beautiful pure gentian blue, and it always stands out wherever it is planted. In everything it is bigger than the regular *Salvia patens*. The pale-green leaf usually has a clear brown-red spot, but when propagated from seed some variation occurs in the markings.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Mexico.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

HIBISCUS TRIONUM

This pretty annual is sometimes known as flower-of-an-hour because its flowers bloom for only a few hours during the day before wilting. Even so it is a must for lovers of annuals, as every day, over a period of months, new large (5cm) flowers open, which are cream to soft-yellow coloured and have a dark heart containing a golden-yellow stamen and a dark-red pistil. It is a well-branched plant with deeply grooved leaves that combines well with perennials, but also looks good grown in a pot. The flowers are followed by hairy, bell-shaped seed capsules and are best left to self-seed.

Height 1m.
Origin Central Europe, Asia, Africa.
Conditions Medium moist soil; full sun.
Hardiness USDA 2a-11.
Season of interest Summer.

CALAMAGROSTIS EMODENSIS

Unlike many other grasses in the *Calamagrostis* genus, which have a more upright growth, this feathery flowering species has a more weeping habit with soft, fluffy, silver-pink flower stems that hang far down and spread out widely. It's become a popular grass for New Perennial plantings but was first described in 1850 by the German botanist August Heinrich Grisebach (1814-1879), who named the species after the Emodus Mountains in Nepal. Although it's happy in most soils, make sure the soil isn't too fertile, otherwise the grass mound will collapse.

Height 1m.
Origin Nepal.
Conditions Any soil that's not too fertile; full sun to part shade.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Summer.

PLACES TO VISIT

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best both in Europe and the UK

The specialised nursery **Tuingoed Foltz** run by Bob Foltz and his partner Andries Bierling is one of the best perennial nurseries in the Netherlands. It also has a very beautiful garden, including a new exotic garden that is very lovely to explore in late summer Both Bob and Andries are keen plant collectors, and among the many thousands of perennials on display you will find the Dutch national collections of *Salvia* and *Echinacea*. The nursery itself offers a wide range of ornamental grasses, herbs and annuals, and offers a wide selection of agapanthus, geraniums, and dahlias. It also has many plants ideal for a shade garden including hostas, epimediums and some spectacular-looking arisaemas, alongside other botanical rarities. Hereweg 346, 9651 AT Meeden, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)598 635 000, tuingoedfoltz.nl

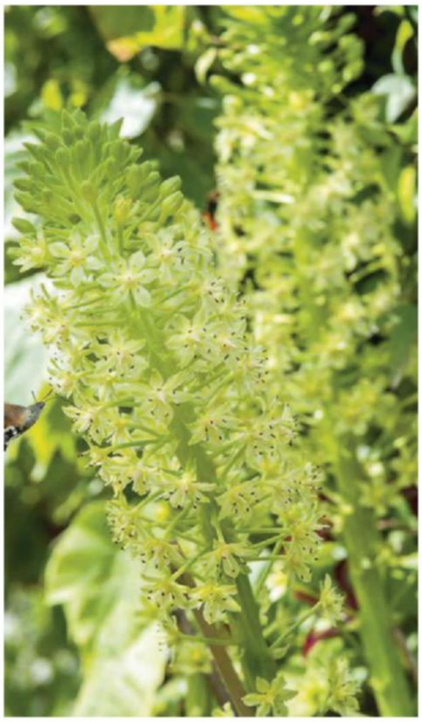
Another Dutch nursery with a beautiful garden is **Kwekerij en Tuin De Boschhoeve**, near Arnhem. Set amid farmland and hidden by enormous deciduous trees, this large idyllic garden behind an old farmhouse, is divided into several areas, including colourful summer and autumn borders, a shade garden and an orchard with spring bulbs. But what makes the garden stand out for us is its decorative and inspiring vegetable garden where unusual vegetables are combined with flowers, including many summer bulbs and dahlias. Every year the garden hosts various events, of which

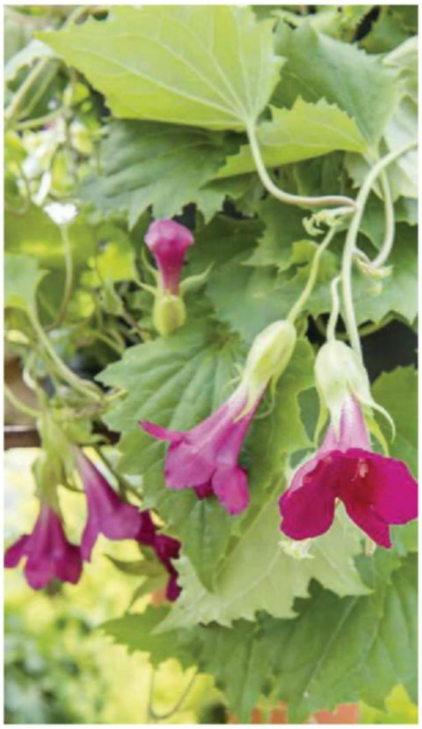
▷

EUCOMIS PALLIDIFLORA

Impressive and exotic, this bulbous plant from South Africa is the largest *Eucomis* in cultivation. Its flower torches alone measure up to 40cm and these sit atop sturdy stems of more than a metre with large, long leaves. The flowers are a modest green-white colour that can create a calm haven in the middle of a colourful border and combine beautifully with colourful echinaceas and grasses. On top of each flower is a small, green crest that looks a little like a pineapple; hence its common name of pineapple plant. It's a great plant for pots but needs winter protection.

Height 1.2m.
Origin South Africa.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.





LOPHOSPERMUM ERUBESCENS LOFOS WINE RED (= 'SUN-ASARO')

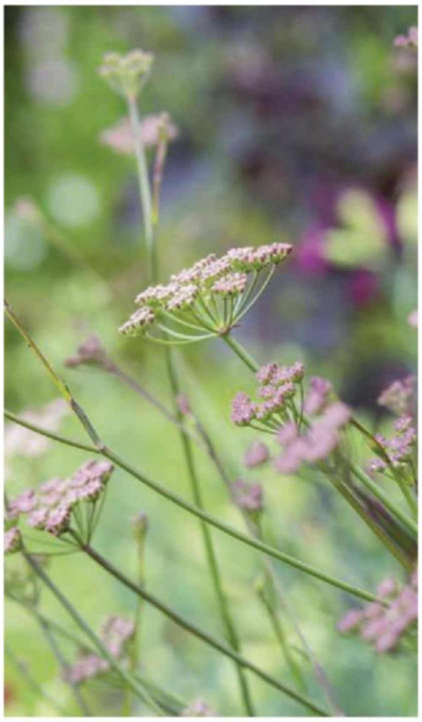
A versatile plant that can work as a climber or for weaving through other plants in a border. Its triangular soft-green leaves have a quiet presence growing through other plants, and the large, trumpet-like, pink flowers appear on the tendrils in increasing numbers as the season progresses. If there are no frosts it will bloom until January. After flowering, it forms fresh-green seed capsules and can be overwintered in situ, provided it remains frost-free.

Height 1.5m.
Origin Mexico, Guatamala.
Conditions Well-drained, fertile soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H2.
Season of interest Summer to autumn.

SESELI LIBANOTIS

Grasses and umbellifers are everywhere in nature, and so perfect for giving planting schemes a naturalistic feel. Luckily, there are so many umbellifers that you can find one to use from spring through to autumn. This one has small umbels, which are white with some shades of pink and red. The asparagus-like leaves are a very dark green and almost evergreen, and its airy and transparent growth is perfect for the front edge of a border where its beautiful leaf rosettes can be shown to full effect.

Height 60cm.
Origin Europe, Siberia, northern Iran, Caucasus.
Conditions Moist but well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H6.
Season of interest Summer.



▷ the Snowdrop Fair is the best known. Dineke Logtenberg, Boshoeve 3, 6874 NB Wolfheze, the Netherlands. Tel +31 (0)26 482 1231, boschhoeve.nl

Among our favourite UK gardens at this time of year are those of **Powis Castle** in north Wales. Its dramatic Italianate terraces have been blasted from solid rock and feature a theatrical mix of giant topiary and dancing statues. For us though the real highlight are the lavish herbaceous borders that line the terrace. Planted in fiery, hot colours they look spectacular in late summer and feature several rare and tender plants sheltered by the impressive 300-year-old yew hedges that can reach up to 14m. There's also a formal Edwardian garden and informal woodland area. The medieval castle, which rises up above the terrace offering superb views of the surrounding countryside, is also worth a visit. Welshpool, Powys SY21 8RF. Tel 01938 551944, nationaltrust.org.uk

Another Welsh garden offering both a touch of drama and some impressive hedging is **Veddw House Garden** near Chepstow. Created by the garden writer Anne Wareham and her husband photographer Charles Hawes, the ten-acre garden combines art and history in spectacular fashion as well as some clever planting. Veddw House Garden, The Fedw, Devauden, Monmouthshire NP16 6PH. Tel 01291 650836, veddw.com

In the north of Scotland, on the banks of Loch Ewe, is the unexpectedly exotic **Inverewe Garden.** Warmed by the Gulf Stream and sheltered by woodland, this beautiful garden, created out of bare rock in 1862 by Osgood Mackenzie, is home to many rare and colourful plants, including Wollemi pines, Tasmanian eucalyptus and Himalayan blue poppies, all grown in international zones. Poolewe, Achnasheen IV22 2LG. Tel 01445 712952, nts.org.uk ☐

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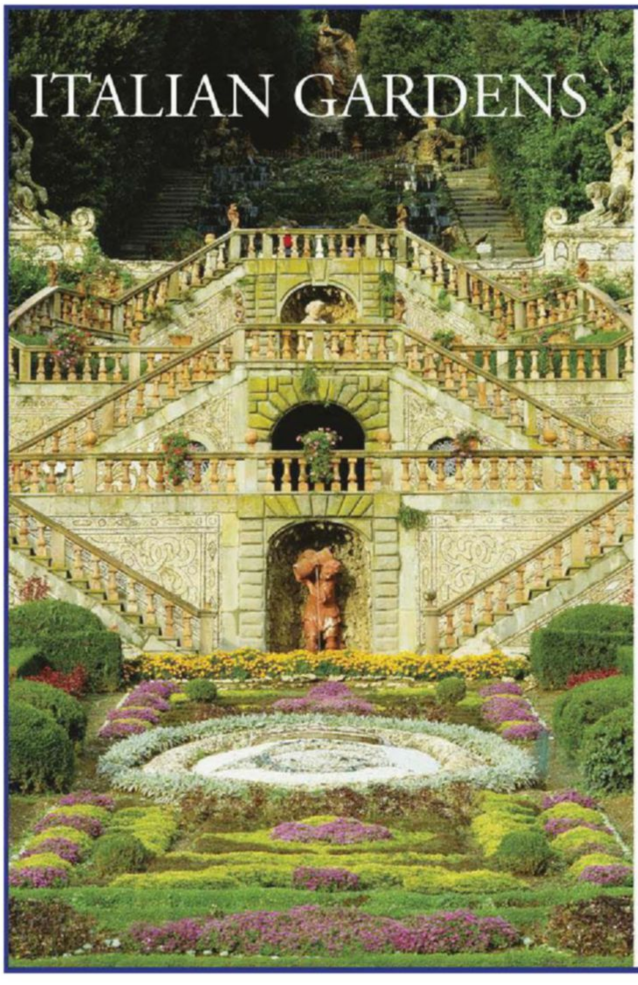

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2019: 22 May, 12 June, 26 Jun, 11 Sep
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The Outsider

This month, horticulturist Hannah Gardner heads to the Estonian island of Sarremaa in search of some of the 36 species of orchid found on the island

WORDS **HANNAH GARDNER** ILLUSTRATION **ALICE PATTULLO**

I have longed to witness an elegant lady slipper orchid (*Cypripedium calceolus*) growing in the wild, and I headed to Estonia with this as a clear intent. Estonia is the smallest of the three former Soviet Republics collectively known as the Baltic states. Flying into Tallinn, you can reach the botanically rich western isles in just a few hours by car. Travelling by ferry to the largest of them, Saaremaa, you pass through Matsalu National Park, a coastal bird watcher's paradise.

Leaving the city means crossing a low-lying expanse of rivers, lakes, marshes and seemingly endless forests. The country is dominated by trees; two million hectares of slender white birch (*Betula pubescens*), pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), spruce, aspen and a few oaks, which make you appreciate how timber permeates life here. Many Estonians still forage, heading into the woods to reinvigorate body and soul. In the countryside, long thatched barns are artfully stacked with wood. In Tallinn, the smart spa saunas are still fuelled by logs, releasing an aromatic scent into the air.

Inspiration for the trip

There has been an orchid festival on Saaremaa since 2013, a celebration of the 36 orchid species found on the island. It is hosted by Loona Manor, the Vilsandi National Park visitor centre and is the brainchild of a strident local botanist. I am also a devotee of the sauna and this is an inseparable part of life on Saaremaa. Almost every house on the island has its own sauna, so you can experience the ritual for yourself amid the trees.

When to go

Spring arrives in early May when the days are already long. June to August are the best months for wildflowers. The orchid festival is on weekends over June and July.

Where to go

The coast and islands have protected areas with shallow thin soil over a limestone base. Known as alvars and alvar forests, these are rare ecosystems that are rich in species. Many of these areas were exclusion zones during the Soviet period, the forest rapidly rewilding the deserted settlements. Conservationists are now, once again, managing and opening up the woods.

After the town of Kuressaare, strutting cranes are as frequent as asphalt roads are rare. Rough gravel tracks cut through the swampy forests as you navigate Vilsandi National Park. In theory you can stop anywhere and walk into the woods, although it is easy to become disorientated and there aren't many paths for those who like a route. The birch and pine woods have a relatively open canopy, allowing up to 100 bryophyte species to thrive in the moss layer alone. I spent a few days botanising here, finding generous swathes of *Hepatica nobilis*, *Anemone sylvestris*, and *Primula farinosa* (foliage only, the spring flowers already spent). Red helleborine (*Cephalanthera rubra*), narrow-leaved helleborine (*C. longifolia*) and the military orchid (*Orchis militaris*) were plentiful and at their best around midsummer's night. I did eventually find a few of my beautiful rare lady's slipper orchids, growing in modest colonies among lily of the valley. They were at the feet of *Pinus sylvestris*, their distinctive golden pouches and burgundy sepals floating above a sea of fresh, pleated leaves.

An atmospheric coastal hiking route (Käkisilma to Vilsandi) leads through the junipers, bog myrtle and reeds to the outer cluster of islands, but come prepared to wade through chest-high sea water. Sculptural sea kale (*Crambe maritima*), sea wormwood (*Artemisia maritima*) and shining cranesbill (*Geranium lucidum*) thrive in the shingle and rocks of this outpost. The green-winged orchid (*Orchis morio*), marsh orchid (*Dactylorhiza majalis*) and pale, scented, wispy sand pinks (*Dianthus arenarius*) are easy to spot.

Not far away, on the highest point of the island (only 54m above sea level), is Viidumäe Nature Reserve. You are asked to stick to the trails, but there is signposting with interesting interpretation in English and the habitats are varied and species-rich.

Plants to grow at home

I returned from Estonia full of love for conifers. Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) is our only native pine and not one that is often chosen for a garden situation, perhaps because people are under-confident about how to place and integrate such a statement tree within a garden. However, given space and attention the Scots pine can flourish into a sculptured and more compact version of the forest tree; one that will provide real interest and structure throughout the year. Without close competition for light, its habit is more characterful and laterally spreading, the rough bark having a glorious rosy glow. In spring you can also harvest its nutritious pollen. It is unfussy about soil, enjoying moist, acidic conditions, but tolerating poor rocky alkaline ground, like that of the Estonian alvar forests. Growth is quite rapid, so pruning is a requirement.

Fortunately *Pinus sylvestris* is a dream subject for the Japanese art of creative pruning for garden trees, known as *niwaki*. Imagine the satisfaction to be found in caring for and coaxing your garden tree into a naturalistic living sculpture. *Niwaki* by the arboriculturist Jake Hobson (Timber Press, 2007) provides good guidelines on how to do it, and Jake (based in Dorset), also runs *niwaki* workshops.

Guides and maps

Orchids of Northern Europe by Sven Nilsson (Penguin, 1979)

For information on the orchid festival: **orhideefestival.ee**

For organised walking tours, contact Maarika Toomel at **heritagetours.ee**

Where to stay

The Eskepaare Boutique Hotel, Lossi 27, 93815, Kuressaare, Estonia. Tel +372 453 8778, ekesparre.ee is a lovely hotel in Kuressaare, one of the best-preserved old towns in Estonia, known for its spa hotels.

Villa Verde, Lümanda maantee 11, Kihelkonna, 93401 Saare maakond, Estonia is a comfortable and chic wooden cabin in a small, unspoilt village on the edge of Vilsandi National Park. Find it on **booking.com**

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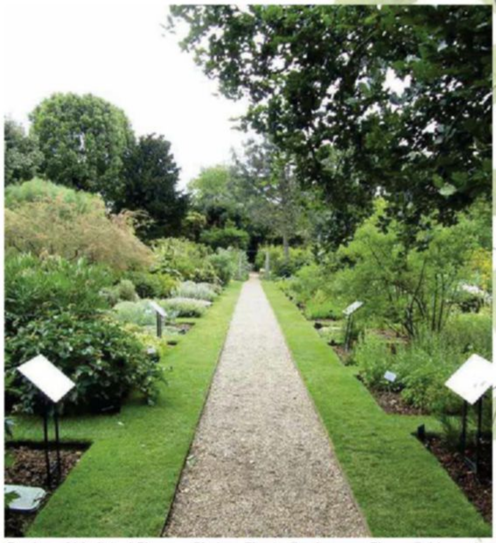

Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden Photo: R Alexander

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GARDENING TALENT

Megan Sharp

Former photographer Megan now looks after eight acres of recently developed gardens at Lords of the Manor, a Cotswold manor house hotel set in an idyllic location

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love I was given a *Ceropegia linearis* subsp. *woodii* cutting from my Nan, which was taken from her mum's plant. Three generations of this vine of hearts, which grew and grew all the way down the stairs.

Who has inspired your gardening career? It's definitely in my blood as my Irish great grandfather was renowned for cutting perfectly straight hedges on the estate he worked on. My mum and auntie are professional gardeners too and this shared skill within the family has inspired me. I initially studied fashion styling and photography and worked as a portrait photographer, but after six years of London life I needed to get back to my country roots and get (literally) down to earth.

Horticultural hero Herb expert Jekka McVicar is one of the most inspiring horticulturists I've ever met. I love her energy, she will get you so excited about a plant, making you taste it and fall in love with it in an instant. After meeting her you will want to create a herb garden and eat, smell, drink herbs all day long.

Favourite landscape I love the contrast of Brutalist concrete architecture softened with plants and their organic green forms. The Barbican in London really does it for me; one day I'll create a concrete garden and fill it with plants as if humans had left the planet.

What is it that inspires you each day? The gardens here were designed by Julie Toll and it's such a pleasure to work in a garden planned by someone who understands the work that goes into gardening. I really enjoy seeing her colour and texture combinations throughout the year – you get a real insight into how a seven-times Chelsea Gold designer thinks.

Biggest challenge facing gardeners today I think we are realising actually how bad we gardeners are for wildlife and the landscape. The challenge is not to impact on the environment while also not trebling our workload.

Favourite gardening book Robert John Thornton's *The Temple of Flora* from 1799 to 1807 (reproduced by Taschen in 2013) is what I asked for on completing my horticultural course. The art in this book inspires me every day. I'd wallpaper the walls with it if it wasn't such a beautiful book.

Contact lordsofthemanor.com The gardens are open to the public. To arrange a tour email 8acres@lordsofthemanor.com

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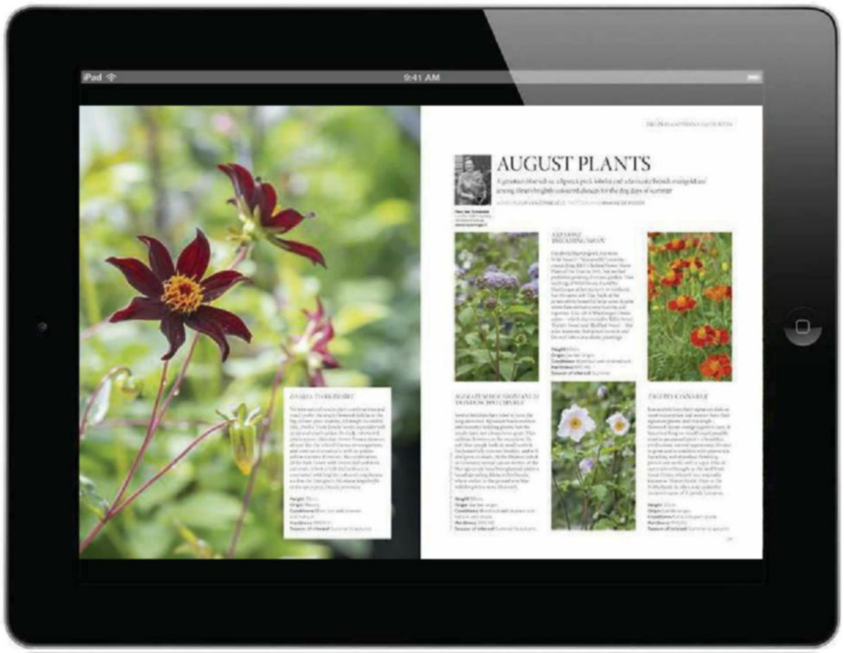
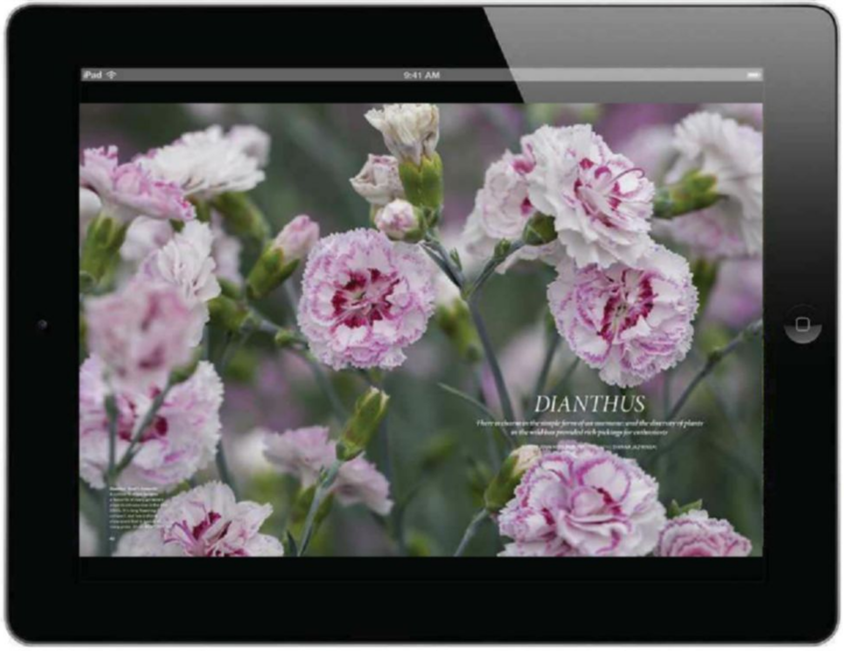


AUGUST PLANTS

LET IT RAIN



DIANTHUS

A must-have read for passionate gardeners, *Gardens Illustrated* magazine provides a unique insight into the world's most beautiful gardens, expert advice and planting ideas.

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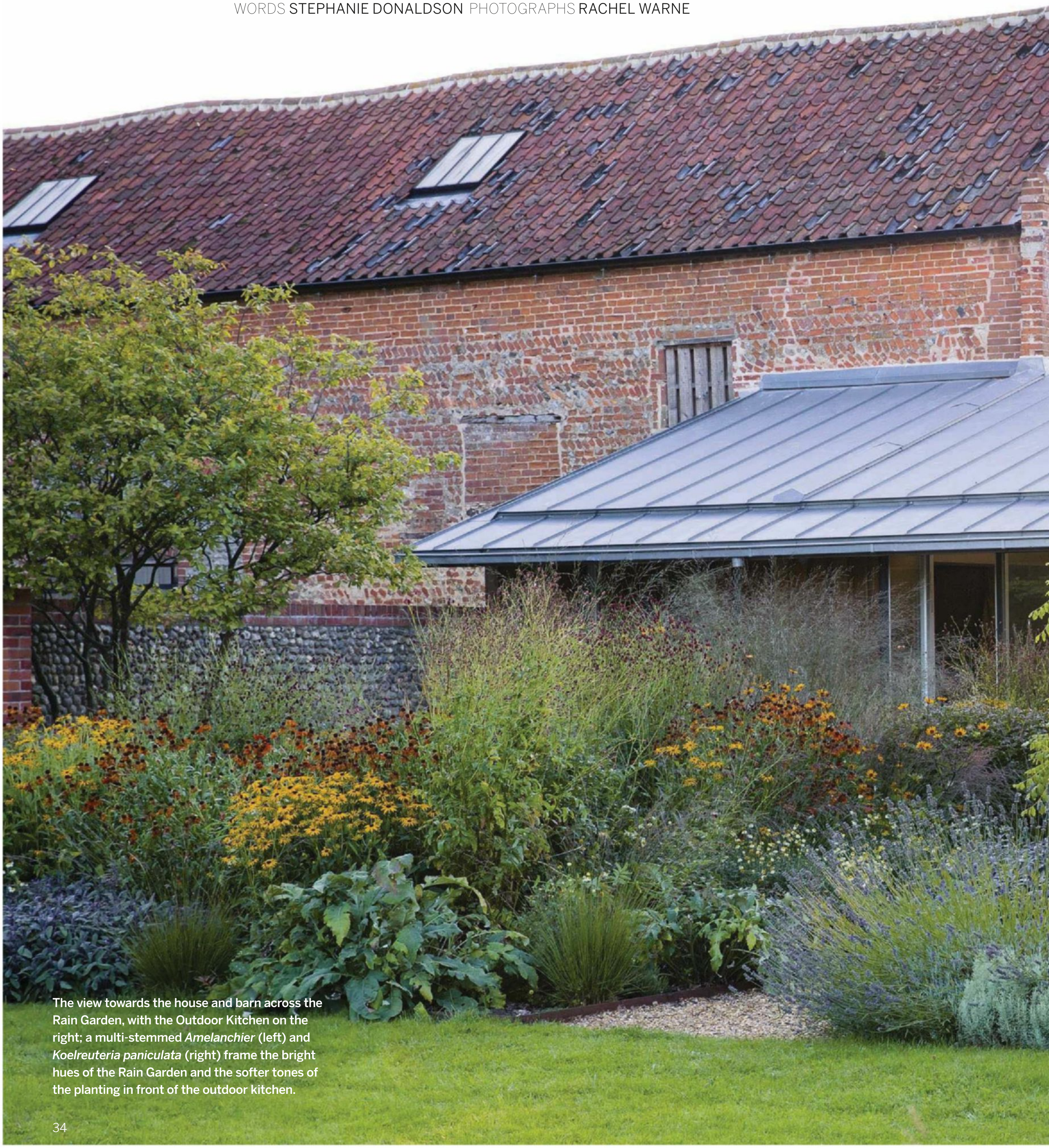
LET IT RAIN

Considered but practical planting in Emily Erlam's private Norfolk garden creates a constantly evolving space for the designer and her family to enjoy

WORDS **STEPHANIE DONALDSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **RACHEL WARNE**

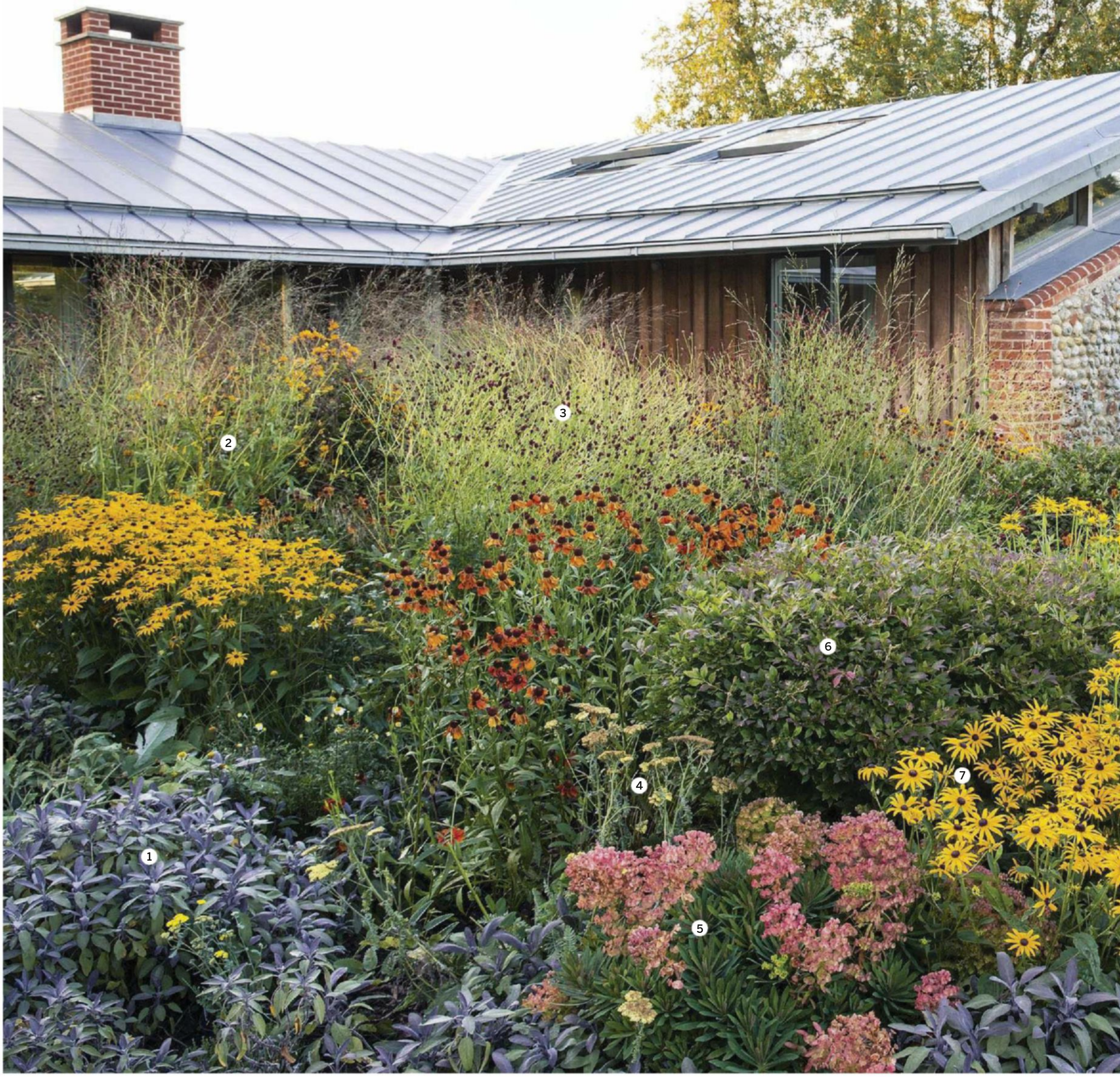


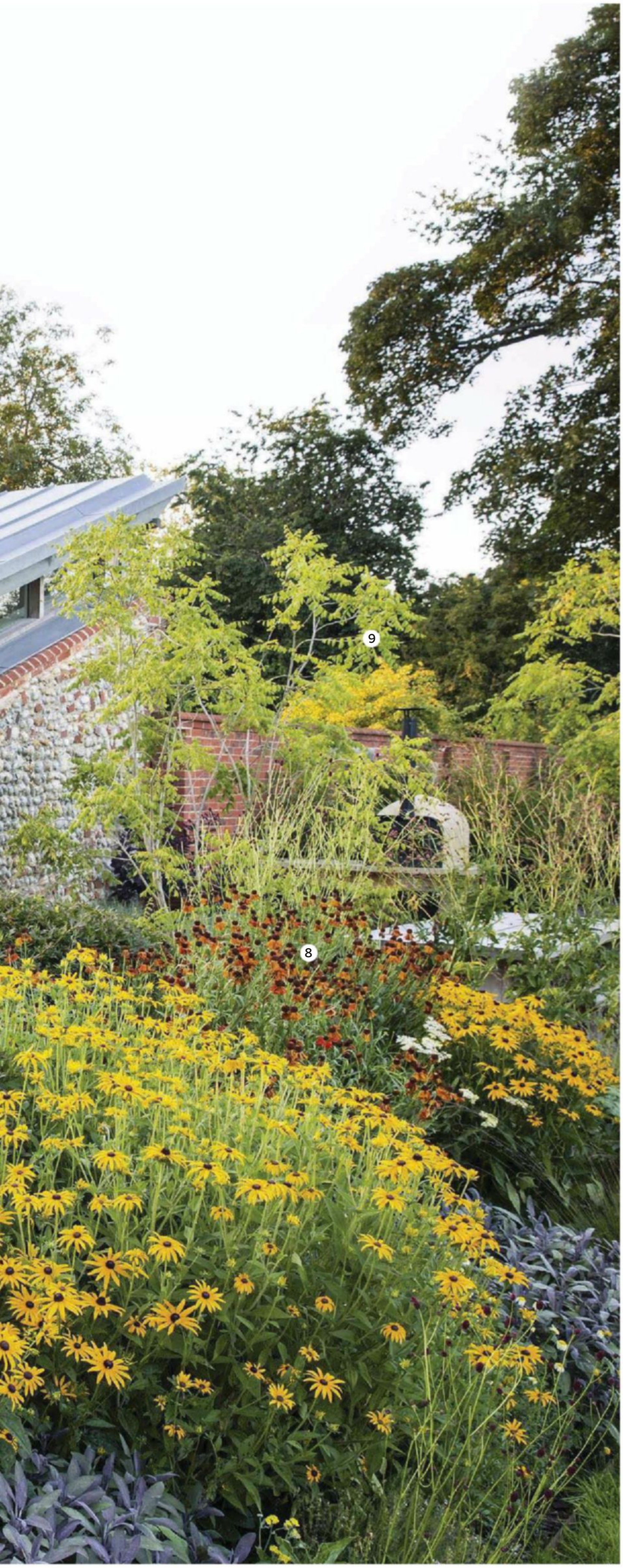
The view towards the house and barn across the Rain Garden, with the Outdoor Kitchen on the right; a multi-stemmed *Amelanchier* (left) and *Koelreuteria paniculata* (right) frame the bright hues of the Rain Garden and the softer tones of the planting in front of the outdoor kitchen.

IN BRIEF

Name Tithe Barn.
What Courtyard enclosed on three sides by a house and a flint wall.
Where North Norfolk.
Size Rain Garden is 110 square metres.
Soil Variable, with lozenges of clay, but generally good.
Climate Average winter -5°C.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

MY PLANTING IS ALWAYS EVOLVING, USING PINKS, YELLOWS AND REDS TO WORK WITH THE BRICK





Garden designer Emily Erlam's home is in deepest north Norfolk – the bit where the roads narrow to single-track lanes enclosed by high banks and overhanging trees – and where the traffic consists largely of fossicking pheasants and partridges. The pace of life here is very different from that of her busy design practice in the King's Cross area of London. The Tithe Barn is the place where she gardens for herself – in peace and privacy.

Eight years ago, Emily bought the 18th-century brick barn, its adjoining old pig shed and flint-walled yards, and the surrounding three acres of land. Once the architects had worked their magic on the buildings, she began to plan her garden. Two-and-a-half acres were retained as a tree-fringed meadow, bordered by large expanses of lawn where Emily's two sons play cricket and football. Having dealt with the bigger picture, Emily could concentrate on the areas close to the house.

"As far as the design process was concerned," Emily says, "I treated myself as the client." The remaining space was divided into three connected areas – the Rain Garden, leading to the outdoor kitchen and the Orchard beyond. "As you pass from one to another, each is relaxed and joyous, contained and with its own identity and sense of tranquillity. I stopped myself making it overcomplicated. Although I loved the idea of the sumptuousness of a kitchen garden, the design process is about having big visions and then honing them down – knowing the feeling I wanted to create and stopping at that point. So there is no vegetable garden; instead, the partially walled Orchard has the feeling of productivity without the work."

Although Emily was initially slightly disappointed with the southeast orientation, it has proved to be extremely sheltered from the prevailing southwesterlies, with several layers of defence, which means that the family is able to make maximum use of the garden. The outdoor kitchen is used ▷

NINE KEY PLANTS IN THE RAIN GARDEN

1 ***Salvia officinalis* 'Purpurascens'** Semi-dwarf evergreen with purple foliage when young, maturing to grey-green with blue flowers. 60cm.AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b†.

2 ***Molinia caerulea* subsp. *caerulea* 'Edith Dudszus'** Dark-purple spikelets on arching stems above dense tussocks. 90cm. RHS H7.

3 ***Sanguisorba officinalis*** Dense red flowers atop wiry stems, above feathery foliage, from June to September. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

4 ***Achillea* 'Terracotta'** Flattened flowerheads on upright stems fade from rich terracotta to biscuity tones as they mature. 1m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

5 ***Euphorbia* x *martini*** Dwarf evergreen sub-shrub with grey-green leaves and salmon-coloured flowers. 60cm. RHS H5, USDA 6a-8b.

6 ***Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus'** Compact shrub with stunning red autumn foliage and corky winged bark in winter. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.

7 ***Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm'** Large, golden-yellow, daisy-like flowers from August to October borne on upright stems. 60cm. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

8 ***Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty'** Upright perennial with dark-centred, copper-red flowers from June to August. 1.25m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-8b.

9 ***Koelreuteria paniculata*** Slender deciduous tree with divided leaves and panicles of yellow flowers. 8m (more compact when multi-stemmed). RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

I DIDN’T WANT PLANTING THAT WAS SO INTENSIVE I COULDN’T LOOK AFTER THE GARDEN MYSELF

▷ all year round, for example, with Emily doing a lot of slow cooking in the wood-fired oven.

The Rain Garden was the first of the three gardens to be laid out. It is closest to the house and is dominated by a large bed of exuberant planting that extends out into the lawn. Vertical molinias and tall sanguisorbas erupt from among mounds of perennials including rudbeckias, heleniums and purple sage. A trio of dwarf *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' anchor the perennials – and turn a vivid red in autumn. The covered porch that runs along both sides of the house allows Emily and her family to spend time in this garden even when it rains – hence the name. To one side, a gravelled area shaded by a multi-stemmed *Amelanchier* tree contains a table designed by Emily, with cedar chairs adapted from a 1950s design. The *Amelanchier* was the first thing Emily planted when she reclaimed the garden from the builders.

Because this area of the garden had been the hard standing in front of the former pig shed, many layers of concrete and hardcore had to be excavated before any gardening could be done. Work completed, good-quality topsoil was brought in and Emily placed the order for the plants, only to find that the entire area filled with water when it rained. A compacted layer of chalk was found to be the culprit, and clay lozenges in the soil exacerbated the problem. This meant ripping out the chalk and installing French perforated drains before any planting could begin.

The Rain Garden is now in its fifth year. "I have been greatly inspired by the tall planting at Jardin Plume in Normandy and have chosen plants for a similar effect in the autumn," says Emily. "My planting is constantly evolving, using pinks, yellows and reds to work with the brick. Anything new gets a bit of love until it has established itself, but basically everything has to survive alongside the other plants. It's quite a science. Although the garden was designed with autumn in mind – the time when the molinias and *Euonymus* turn butter yellow and red respectively – it has to perform all year round. Seasonal drama is important to me."

Explaining her approach to this very personal project, Emily says, "I consider this to be a very normal garden. The whole point was to focus on the plants, but I didn't want planting that was so intensive that I couldn't look after the garden myself." ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Emily's work at **erlamstudio.com**

Clockwise from top left

Exuberant planting separates the outdoor living area from the Orchard beyond. Purple sage (*Salvia officinalis* 'Purpurascens') softens the edges of the border as it tumbles over the gravel and lawn.

Layers of planting in front of the brick and flint wall of the courtyard with the bright yellow of rudbeckias and bronze *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' in the foreground topped by a haze of molinias and sanguisorbas.

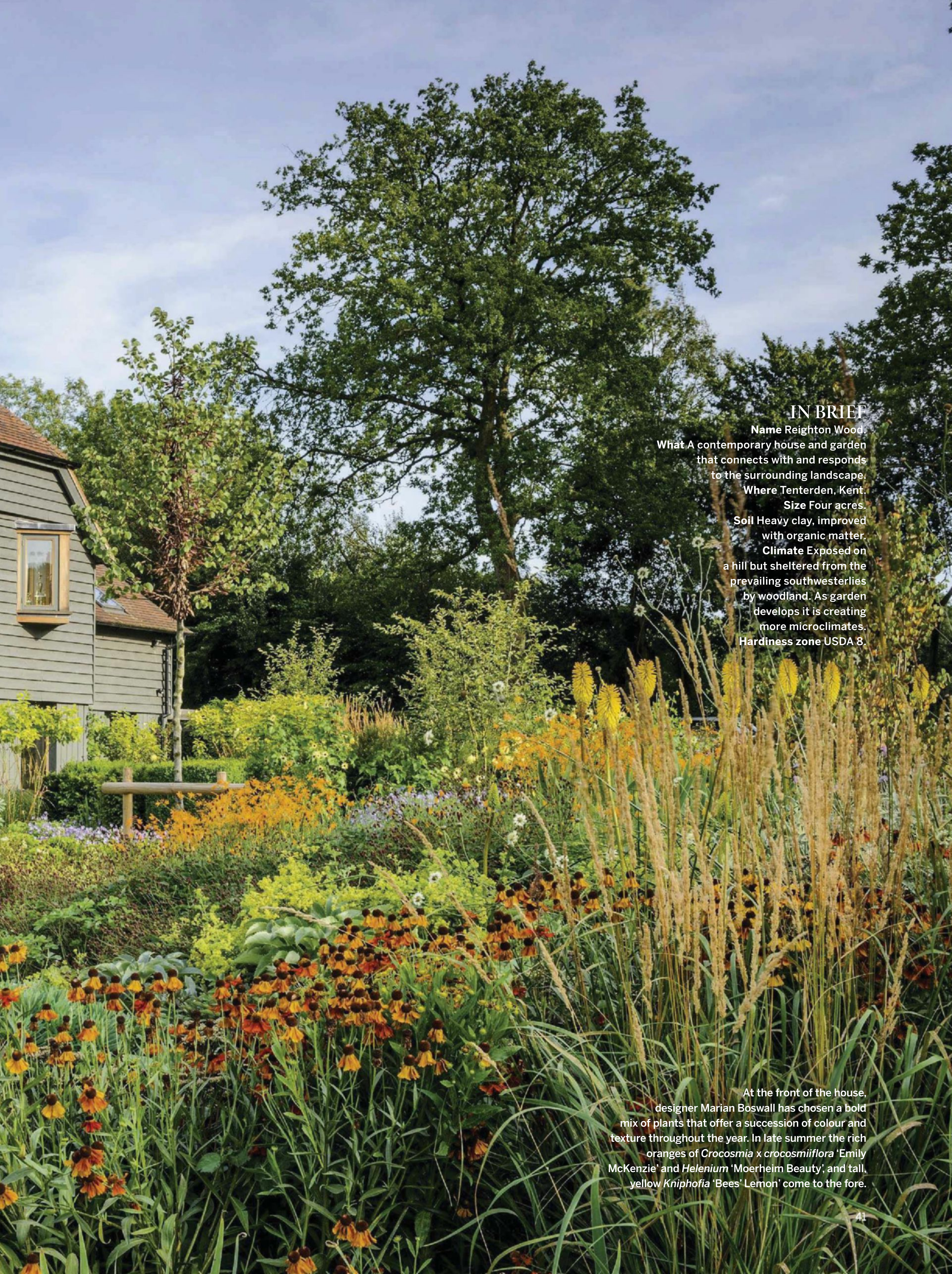
Sheepskin covers on the cedar chairs ensure that Emily and her family stay cosy outdoors even in cold weather. Bright-red *Helenium* 'Ruby Tuesday' and pale-yellow *Anthemis* Susanna Mitchell (= 'Blomit') nudge up against the edge of the porch.

Emily designed the simple table and benches in the outdoor kitchen and surrounded them with fragrant lavender and *Santolina chamaecyparissus*. The multi-stemmed *Koelreuteria paniculata* is a favourite tree of Emily's.

BLENDING IN

Using her knowledge of the local vernacular, designer Marian Boswall has created a garden for Reighton Wood that integrates beautifully with its surroundings

WORDS **TROY SCOTT SMITH** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**



IN BRIEF

Name Reighton Wood.
What A contemporary house and garden that connects with and responds to the surrounding landscape.
Where Tenterden, Kent.
Size Four acres.
Soil Heavy clay, improved with organic matter.
Climate Exposed on a hill but sheltered from the prevailing southwesterlies by woodland. As garden develops it is creating more microclimates.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

At the front of the house, designer Marian Boswall has chosen a bold mix of plants that offer a succession of colour and texture throughout the year. In late summer the rich oranges of *Crocosmia* x *crocosmiiflora* 'Emily McKenzie' and *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty', and tall, yellow *Kniphofia* 'Bees' Lemon' come to the fore.

Tucked away behind high hawthorn hedges in a verdant, curvaceous valley is Reighton Wood, home of Robyn and Mark Reeves and their three children. Surrounded by fields of cows lazily grazing, the flower-studded garden sits on the edge of the market town of Tenterden in the Weald of Kent. The narrow lanes hedged with sweet briar and fragrant honeysuckle that thread through the lush countryside reveal nothing of the hotbed of gardening quietly taking place here.

"Understanding the setting is important," says landscape architect Marian Boswall, whose practice MBLA is only a few miles away from Reighton Wood. She and Robyn first met when Robyn enrolled on one of Marian's design courses, and this intimate garden stuffed to the gunnels with trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs is the result of the friendship between the two women. "Robyn is a botanist and wanted a garden with episodes, areas, movement and abundant planting for pollinators and people," says Marian. "She is very artistic and intuitive, so we had the most lovely time discussing ideas for the garden, and she has embraced every suggestion and really made the garden her own."

For Robyn and Mark the garden is all about the wonderful setting, something Marian felt it needed to embrace more fully. "The house faced away from the countryside, with the biggest views to the lane-side hedge," she says. "We worked with the architect Derek Rankin to refocus the house on to the valley; he designed a contemporary extension, which really helped turn the house around to make the most of the view and fill the house with light." The planting that extends from the house, not only celebrates the architecture, but also in turn cleverly conceals and then reveals the view that the Reeves so love. From this hillside position views extend to the south, over a rural idyll of fields, dotted at intervals with grand old oaks. An inspired piece of planting in the garden teams the magnificent Chinese crab apple, *Malus hupehensis* underplanted with white spirea and *Ornithogalum nutans*. This is echoed in the folds of the fields beyond with great clouds of blossom from native hawthorn and a haze of cow parsley beneath.

From the house long, tree-lined allées provide the prospect of leading you further into the garden and woodland beyond. The land drops briskly away, the vertiginous banks are swathed in our native fern and carpeted with broad brushstrokes of bluebells. In spring wood anemones spill down the valley sides heralding the awakening season. "The garden builds up gradually through the spring to become a riot of colour shape and form in midsummer, and is an immersive sensual journey of scents and movement as the plants end up encroaching on the paths and towering above the visitor," explains Marian.

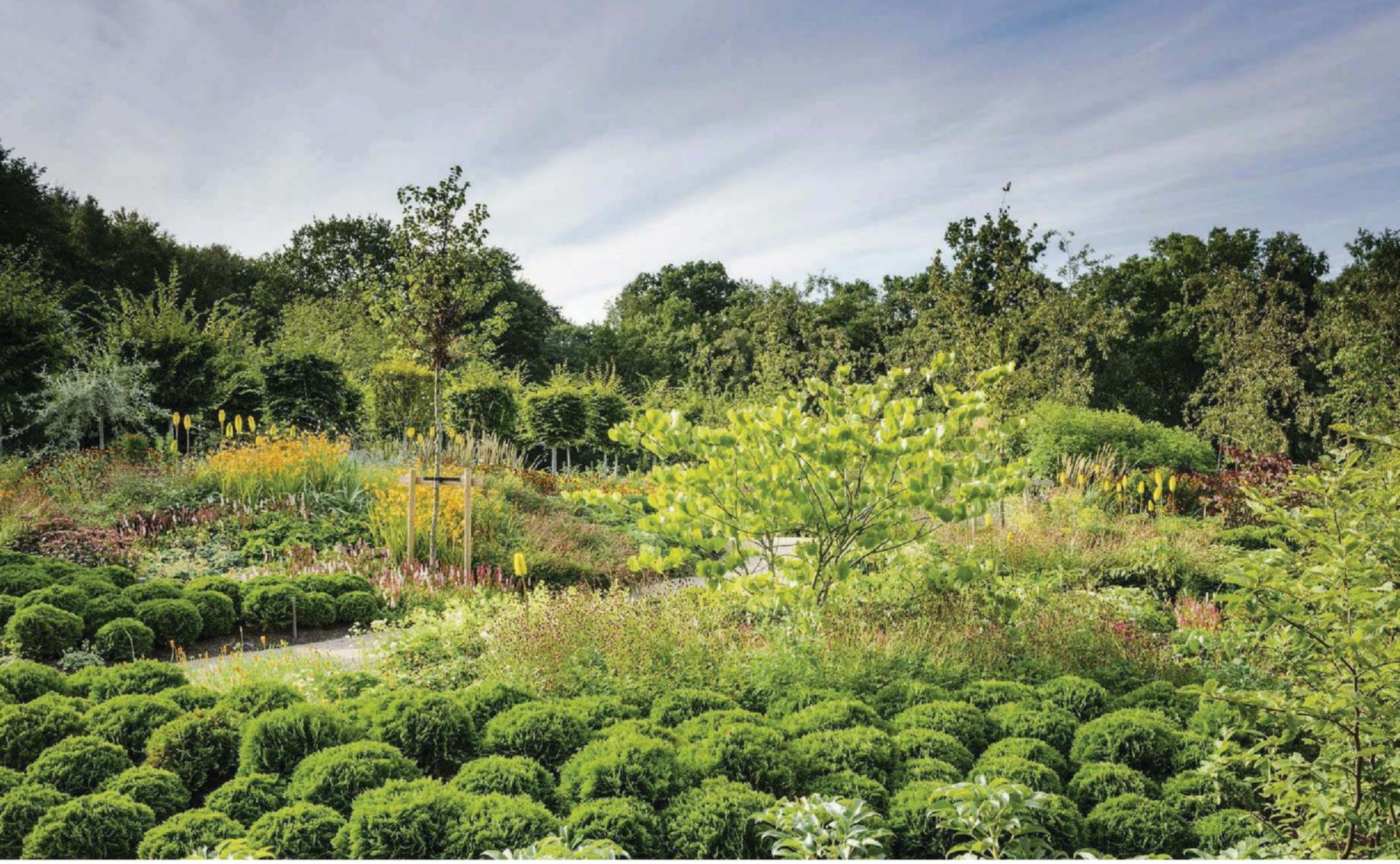
Foliage underpins any planting; it acts as a prelude to the flowers that come later, but for me it is the use of colour that sets the planting at Reighton Wood apart. The green *Hakonechloa macra* swirls around the trunks of *Prunus serrula*, in contrast the dark-foliaged cow parsley, *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing', froths waist-high. Elsewhere swathes of perennials, including geraniums, astrantias, persicarias and euphorbias, are confidently combined in a maelstrom of form, texture and colour. Knitting this Rousseauesque planting together is the light and airy *Knautia macedonica*. The wine-coloured flowers punctuate the air. Together with bronze fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum', which hangs over the lower-storey planting, their repeated presence unifies the discord perfectly. Shrouded in wisteria, a beautifully designed pergola stretches the entire length of the south side of the house and provides welcome shade in the heat of the day. Festooned in early summer with fragrant white blooms.

Reighton Wood is a garden that is subtle yet striking in design, a garden muscular yet free flowing and dreamy, a garden with an unerring sense of proportion and detail, a garden stuffed with interesting plants but uncluttered by an awareness of fashion or competition and, a garden that feels like it has grown as a response to its surroundings. It feels familiar and comforting strolling the many paths and exploring the hidden corners. Robyn and Mark feel strongly that this is their place and have a sense of duty to leave something special after they have gone. I think they might succeed. ◻

USEFUL INFORMATION
Find out more about Marian's work at **marianboswall.com**

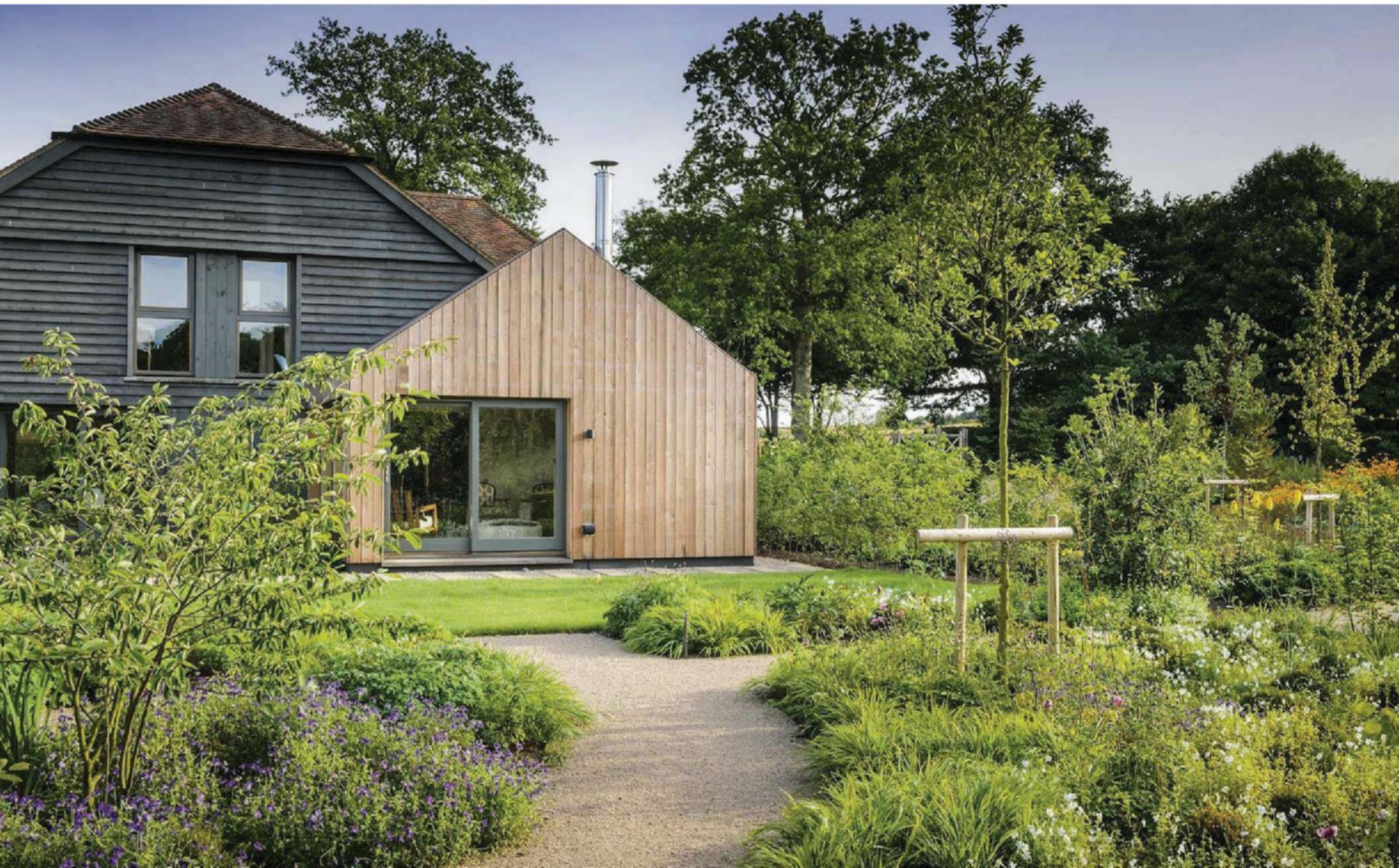
CHOOSING MATERIALS

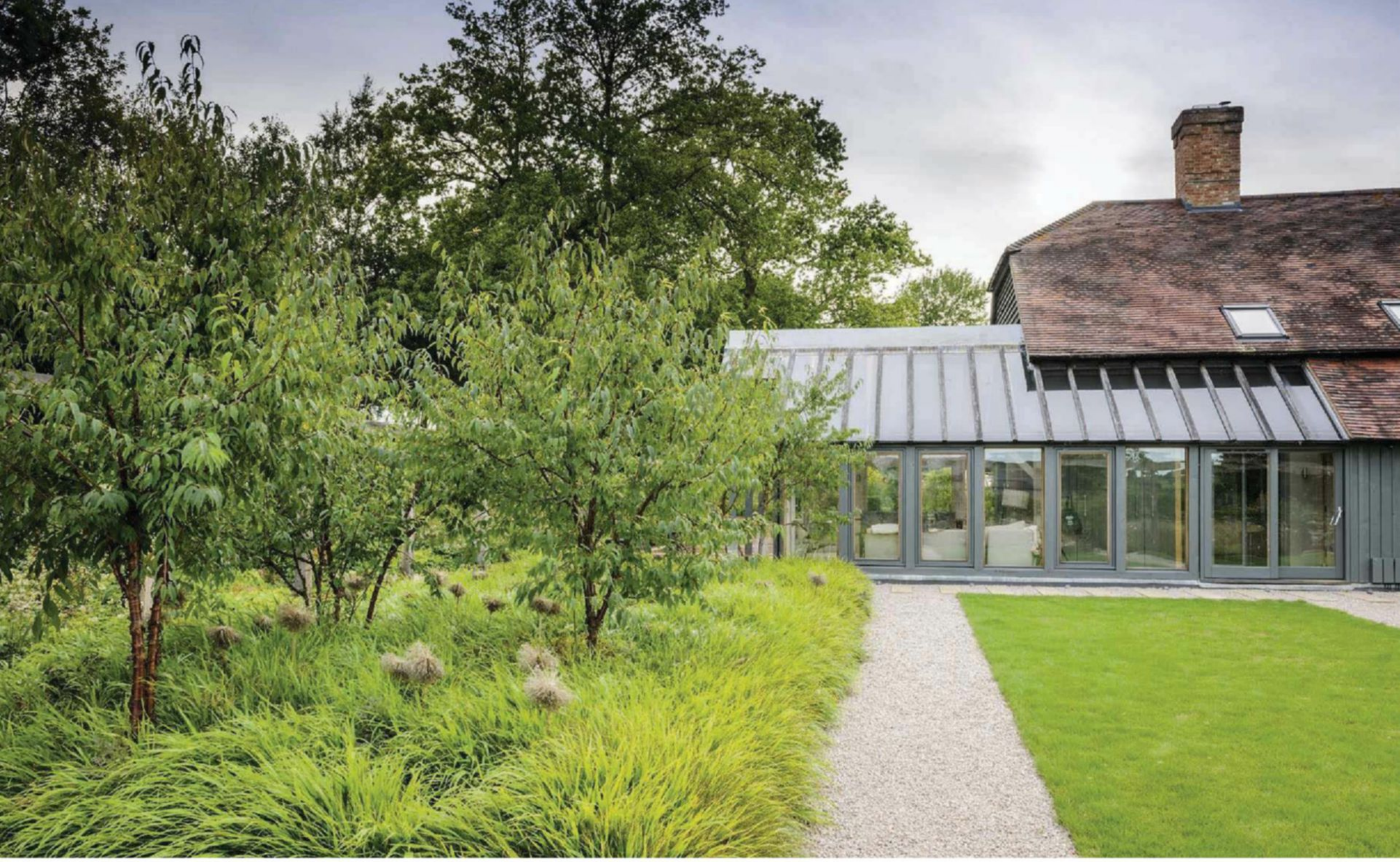
Materials were chosen to be very soft and to fit as part of the landscape. Local Kent clay paviours were laid in a herringbone pattern on the paths and jointed with sand to allow water through and self-seeders to colonise the cracks. The paths are Breedon gravel, both in its classic fine form and also as a larger angular gravel to vary the texture and create some spatial hierarchy to lead the way through the garden. The avenue trees are field grown from Hilliers in Hampshire. Oak is used throughout to weather and last, and to complement the larch cladding on the new extension. The oak pieces by artist Alison Crowther look very comfortable in the setting and form part of the spirit of woodland and water that Robyn wanted to bring back to the ra neglected site she stumbled upon all those years ago.



Above Marian has planted generous groupings of the slow-growing, dark-green *Thuja occidentalis* 'Danica' throughout the garden. Here it echoes the texture of pleached hornbeam allée opposite and the soft curve of the facing berm where vibrant-orange *Crocosmia* x *crocosmiiflora* 'Emily McKenzie' rises like flames.

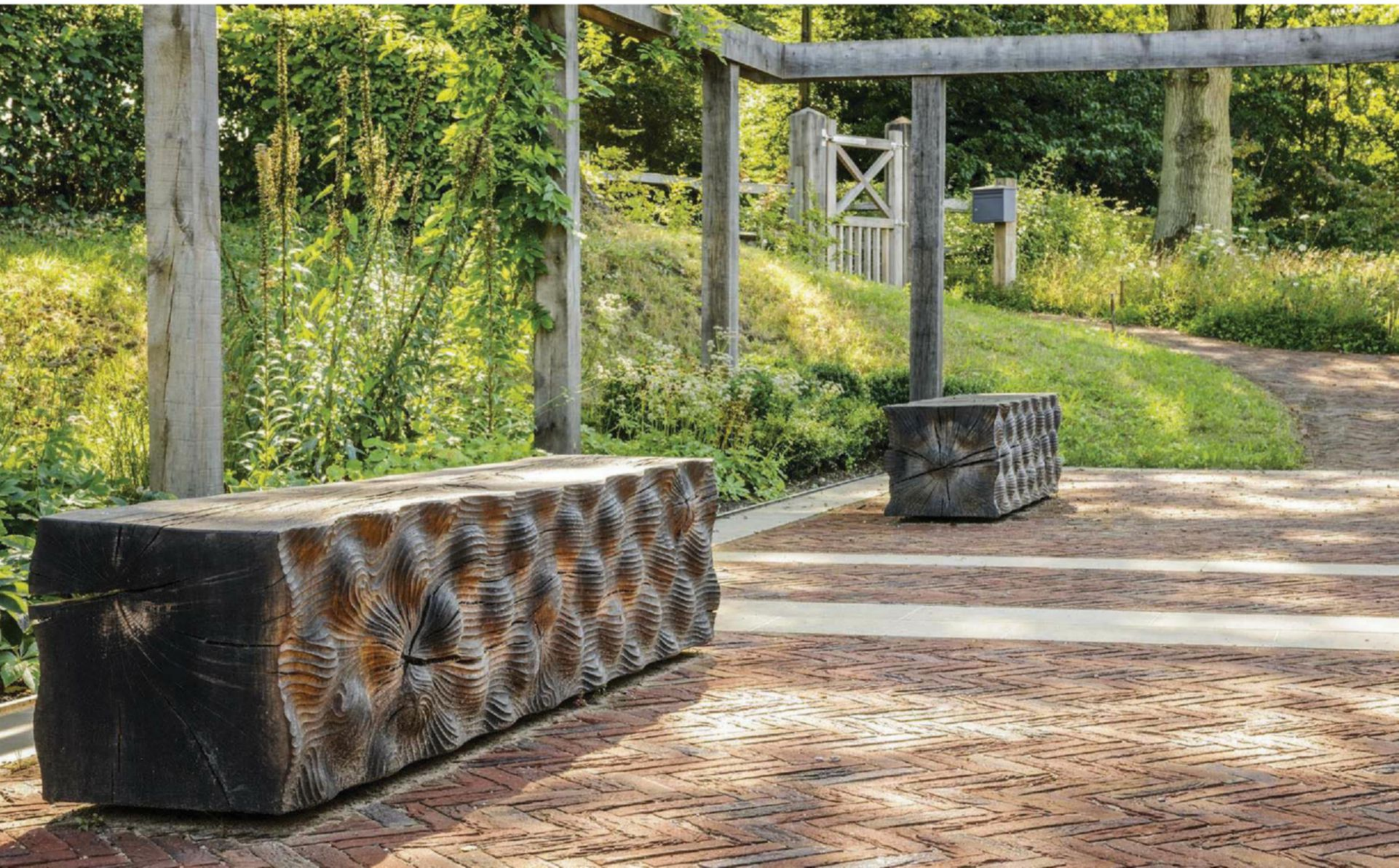
Below The contemporary larch-clad extension has helped turn the house around to make the most of the view. Facing its doorway a meandering gravel path leads you out through *Hakonechloa macra* and *Viola cornuta* Lilacina Group growing under a multi-stemmed *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii* to the garden beyond.

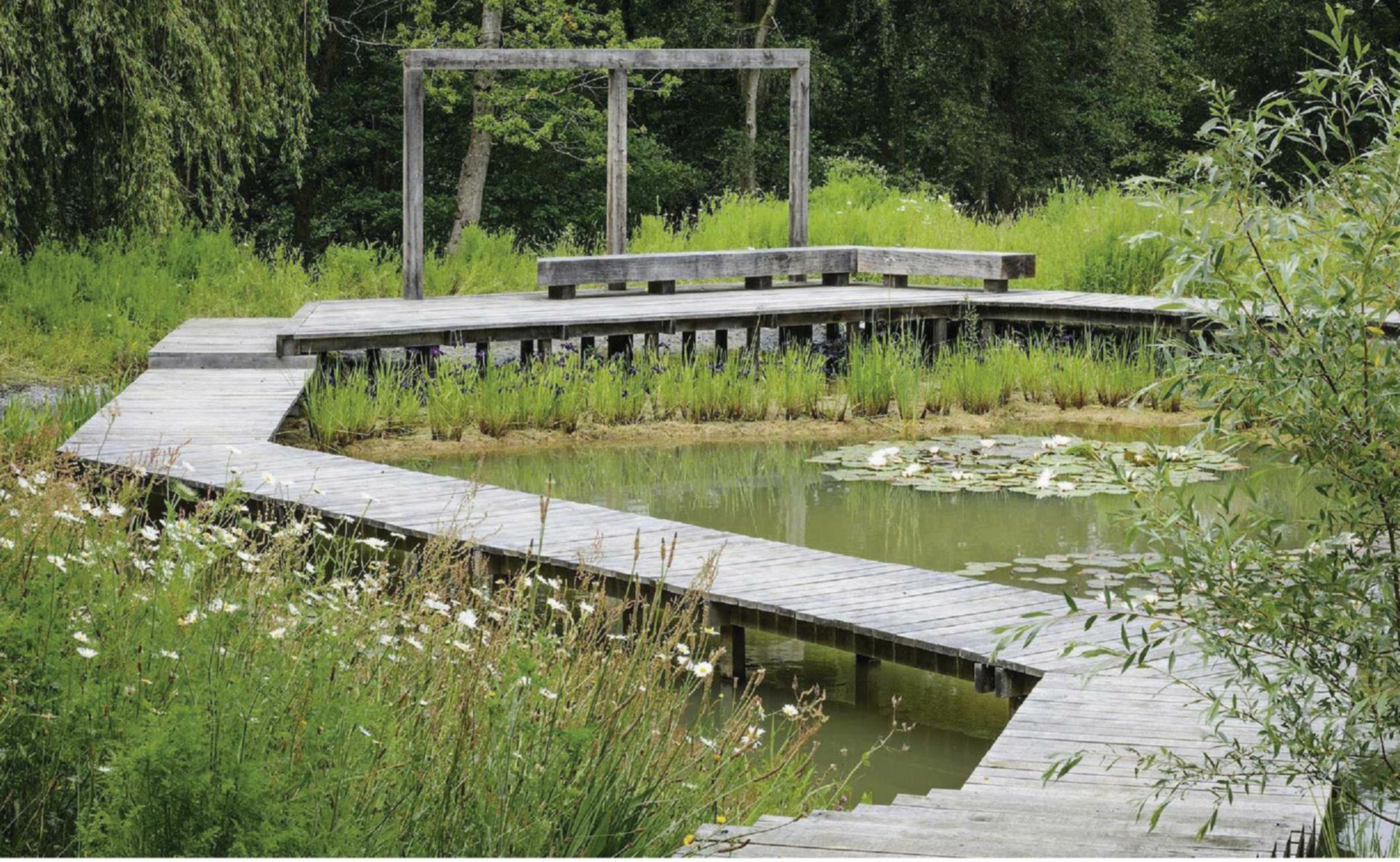




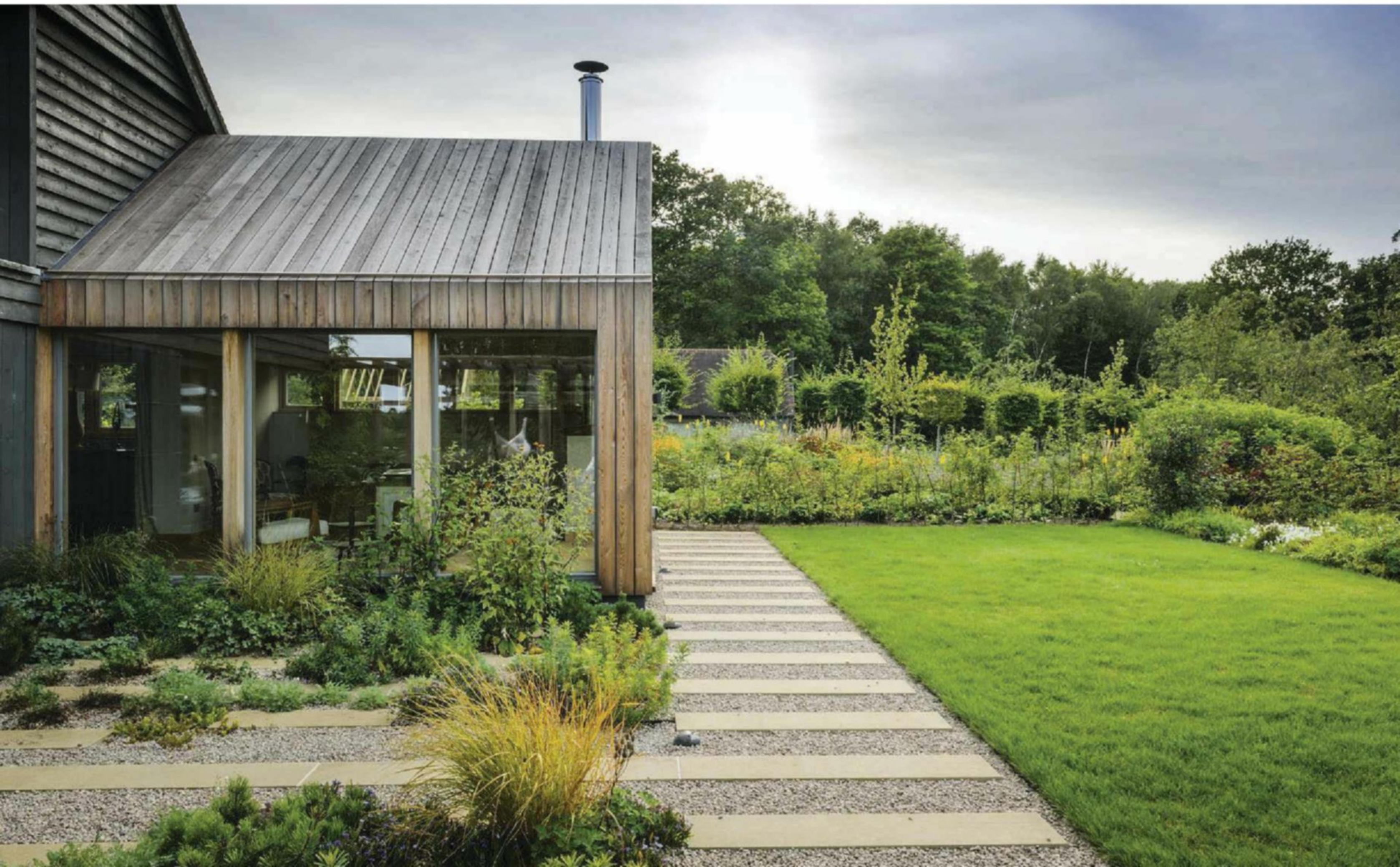
Above Panels of lawn and a path of Breedon gravel provide breathing space in front of the house's contemporary conservatory and are in perfect juxtaposition to Marian's dynamic planting opposite where a row of multi-stem *Prunus serrula* rise from a sea of *Hakonechloa macra* and *Allium* 'Globemaster'.

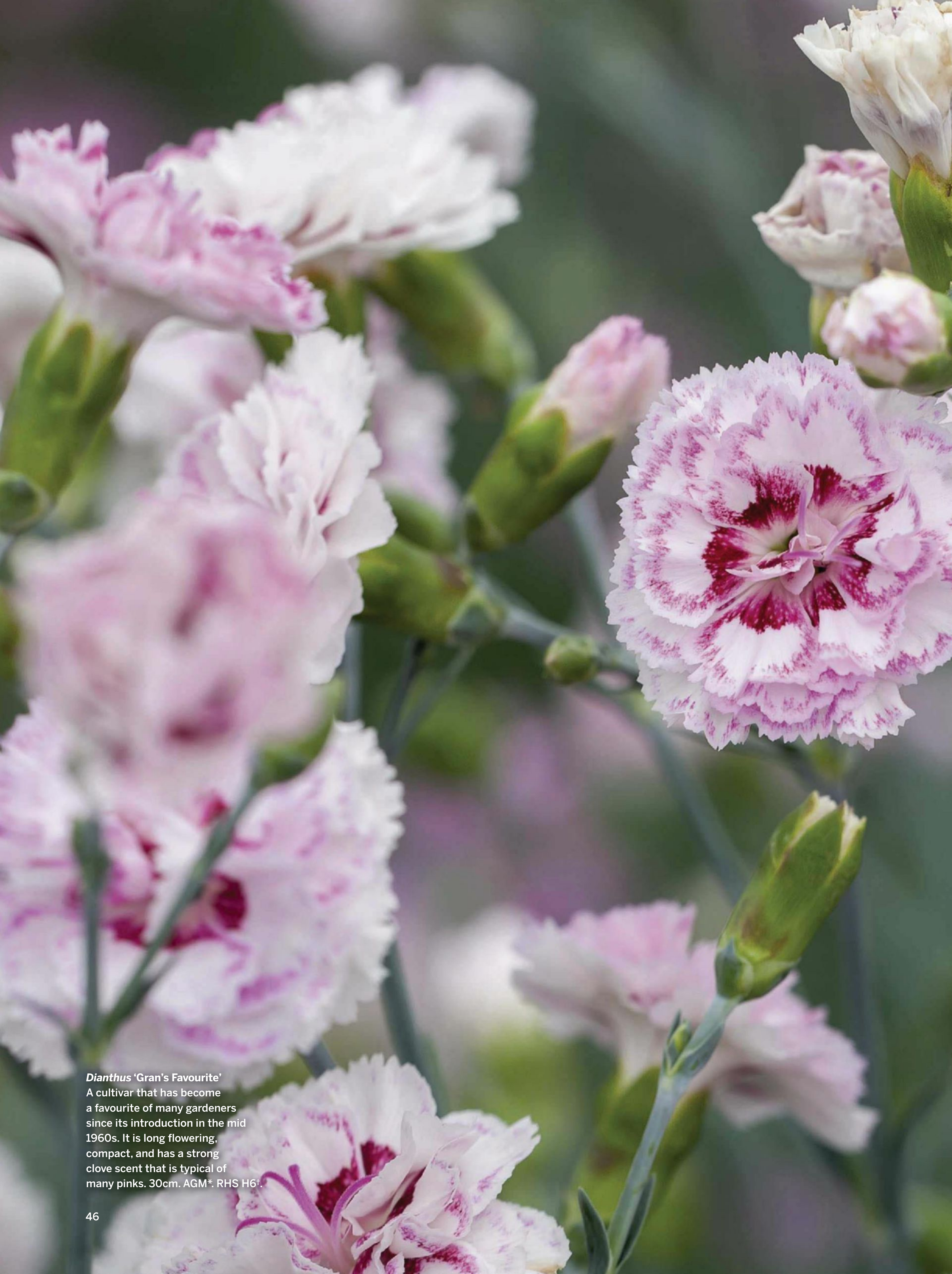
Below The two hand-carved oak benches in the pergola are a sculptural piece, *Rip-Tide,* by Alison Crowther, which was originally designed for Arne Maynard's 2012 Chelsea garden. Along with the oak beams and gate they help connect he house to its setting and the history of the working woodland.





Above Close to the woodland's edge Marian has designed a curved boardwalk across an enlarged lily pond that leads to an oak bench and frame surrounded by wildflowers. It's an elegant link to the simple beauty of the woodland beyond, and a beautiful space to enjoy the impressive chorus of birdsong. **Below** A neat path of Breedon gravel and Crosland Hill sandstone separates the extension from the lawn. To the side, low-growing plants such as *Euphorbia epithymoides* and *Anemanthele lessoniana* growing in the gravel mulch add a softness and spontaneity in contrast to the formality of the lawn.





Dianthus **'Gran's Favourite'**
A cultivar that has become a favourite of many gardeners since its introduction in the mid 1960s. It is long flowering, compact, and has a strong clove scent that is typical of many pinks. 30cm. AGM[*]. RHS H6[†].

DIANTHUS

Brought to Britain by refugees and cultivated by florists' societies, long-flowering pinks are renowned for their spicy perfume

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **DIANNA JAZWINSKI**

Some plants have an immediate, shout-out-loud appeal, others beguile us more slowly. For many years I thought pinks, those low-growing, carnation-like flowers that sit over cushions of grey foliage, to be old-fashioned and too much fuss for too few flowers. I had seen far too many of them during my childhood in the gardens of older relatives to want them in my garden.

It took a collector of pinks to open my eyes to their beauty and to challenge my prejudices. Plant collectors are often eccentric, sometimes geeky but always passionate ambassadors for their plants and it was one, the late Mark Trenear, who showed me the beauty and the history of pinks and, importantly, how they could find a place in the garden.

The genus *Dianthus* includes carnations and sweet williams as well as pinks. Sweet williams are biennial plants with domed heads of small flowers. Seed mixes usually produce plants with a range of pink and magenta flowers.

The distinction between carnations and pinks is sometimes blurred. Carnations are descended from *Dianthus caryophyllus*, a species from southern Europe and North Africa, and tend to produce large flowers on tall stems. To look half-decent in the garden these plants need a lot of support and the palaver involved in staking individual stems means that they have fallen out of favour with most gardeners. Carnations are now mainly grown by the cut-flower trade.

Pinks are descended from *Dianthus plumarius* and are much more compact plants that require no staking and no great horticultural skills for them to flourish. Most of all, however, the flowers have a heady perfume, usually of cloves and other spices. One whiff and you will understand immediately why their popularity has endured.

Pinks have been grown in European gardens for more than 500 years. Raphael's devotional painting *Madonna of the Pinks*, painted in 1507 shows mother and child playing with the flowers. In the 17th century many new varieties of plants, including pinks, arrived in Britain. Refugees fleeing persecution, including Huguenots from France, brought with them many varieties of pinks. New plants were bred by plant collectors and florists' societies.

One of the most important groups in the development of pinks is the Paisley Florists Society, the majority of whose members were weavers who bred distinctive bi-colour flowers, often with fringed petals that became known as Paisley pinks. It is impossible to say for sure that all the old pinks, or heritage pinks, around today are exact descendants of those grown in the 18th and 19th centuries, but they do evoke the flowers that were prized during that period. *Dianthus* 'Pheasant's Eye' was first recorded in 1690. The centre of the flower is deep red and the fringed white petals have a red stain to their tips. Another old cultivar, *Dianthus* 'Dad's Favourite', is reputedly a survivor of the Paisley pinks. The centre of the flower is beetroot red and each of its white petals is edged with a broad red line. The majority of pinks are at their peak during June and July and flower just once. At the beginning of the 1900s plant breeders developed repeat-flowering hybrids. Montagu Allwood produced a range of long-flowering pinks that were originally known as *Dianthus* x *allwoodii* – now known as *Dianthus* Allwoodii Group – and the best-known of these, *Dianthus* 'Doris', a double pink flower with a raspberry centre, is still widely available.

Pinks have traditionally been grown around roses but be careful that the rose foliage doesn't overwhelm the pinks. Around the front of a border they mingle well with *Allium senescens* subsp. *glaucum*, a low-growing allium with similar blue-grey foliage to the pinks. I have also seen pinks charmingly partnered with the nodding flowers of *Allium cernuum*. I always grow a few in pots so that I can bring them close to the house to enjoy the delicious perfume. I am not quite the nerdy collector, but I might be on the way. □

• Author John Hoyland is a plantsman, garden writer and dianthus convert who has gardens in both southeast England and southwest France. His recommendations for the best dianthus can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What A genus of about 300 species of mainly herbaceous perennials – and hundred of cultivars and hybrids – that have been grown in European gardens since the 16th century. Also known as pinks or gilly flowers.

Origins Europe and Asia.

Season Late spring and early summer flowering.

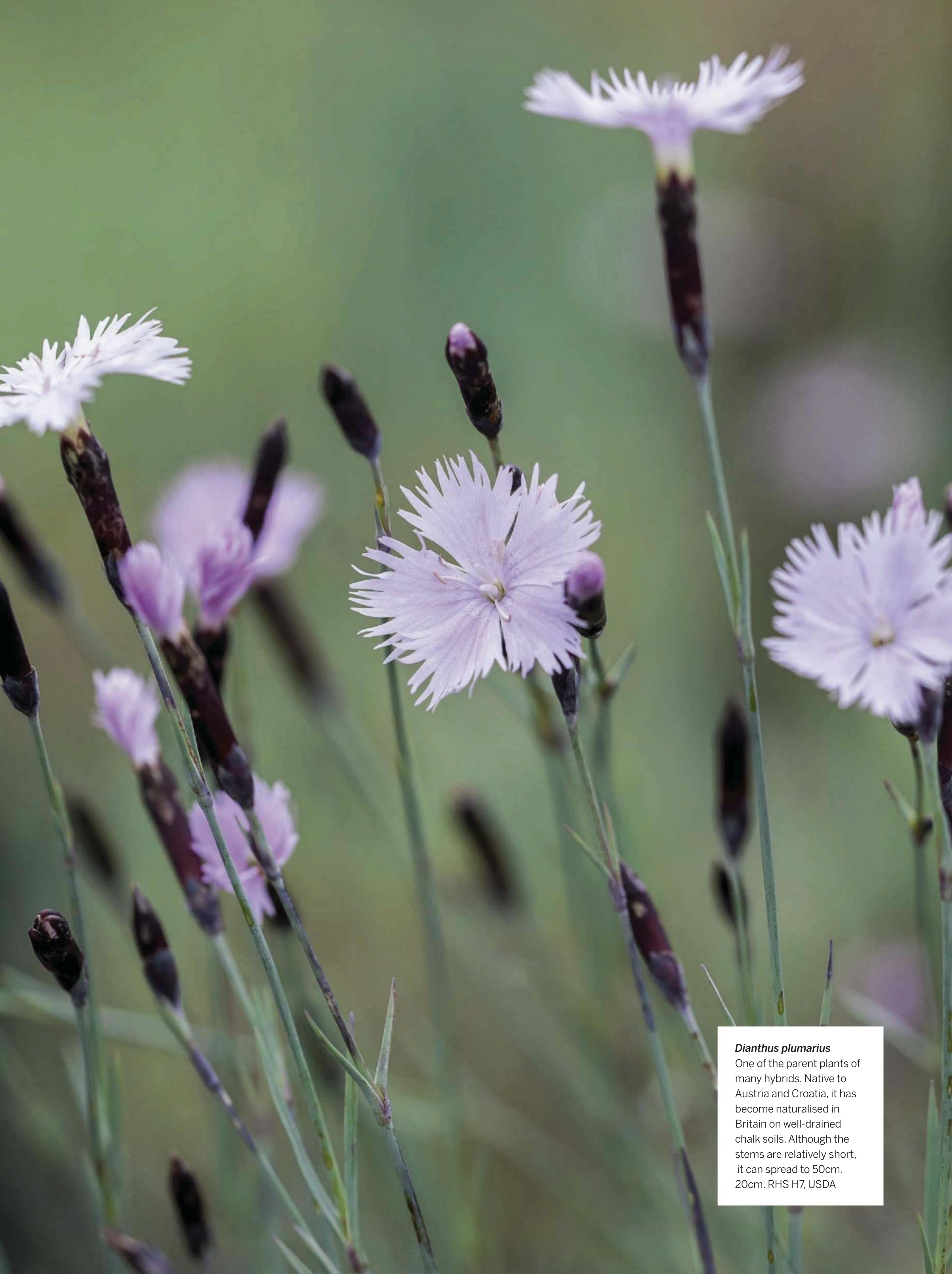
Size From about 10cm to 80cm tall.

Conditions Most need very well-drained soil in an open sunny situation.

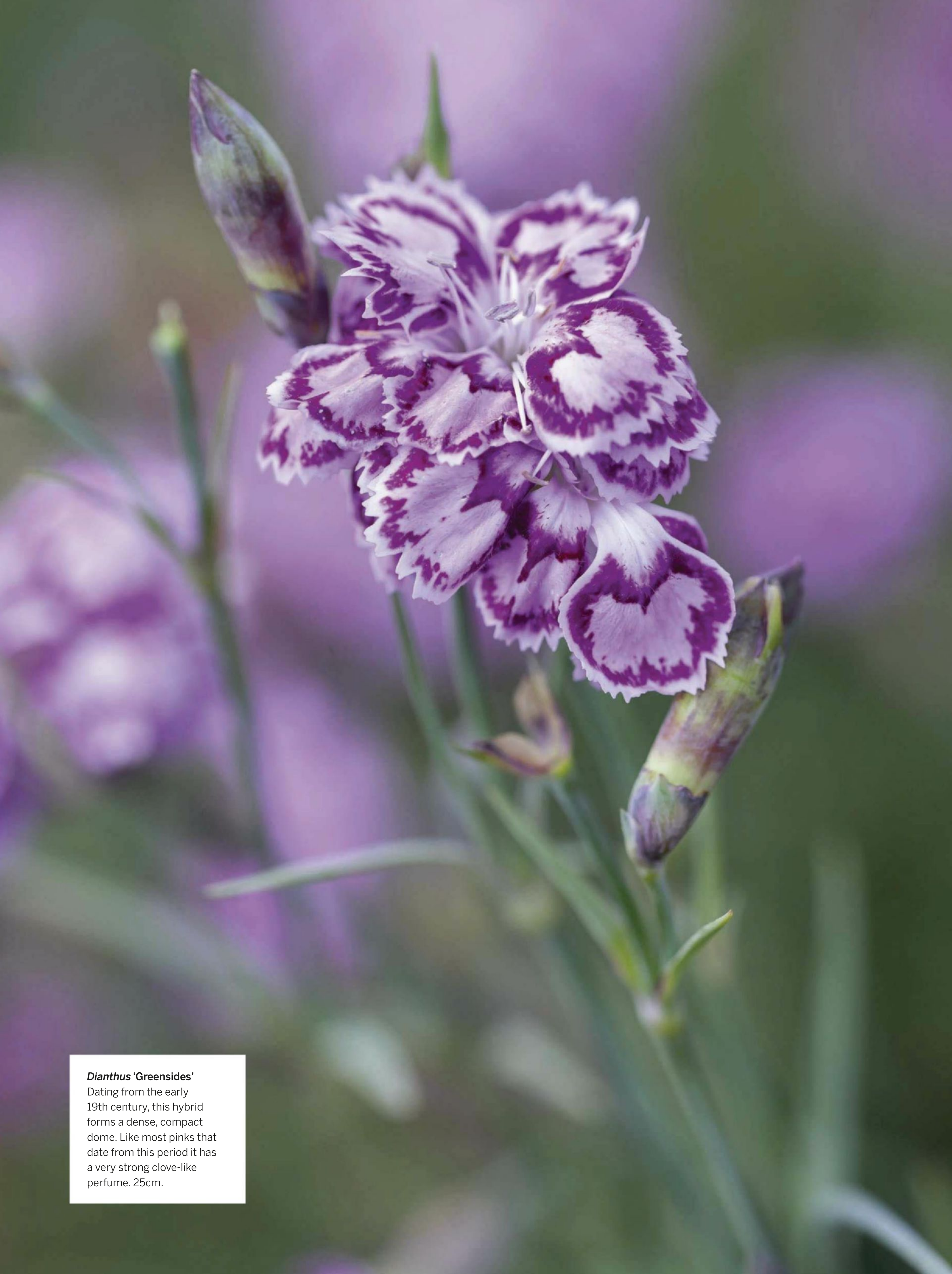
Hardiness Dianthus are hardy in most areas of the UK and northern Europe. Those grown in pots may need some winter protection. Most have an RHS hardiness rating of H6 (hardy to temperatures of -20 to -15ºC), and are suitable for gardens in USDA zones 3a to 9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.
†Hardiness ratings given where available.

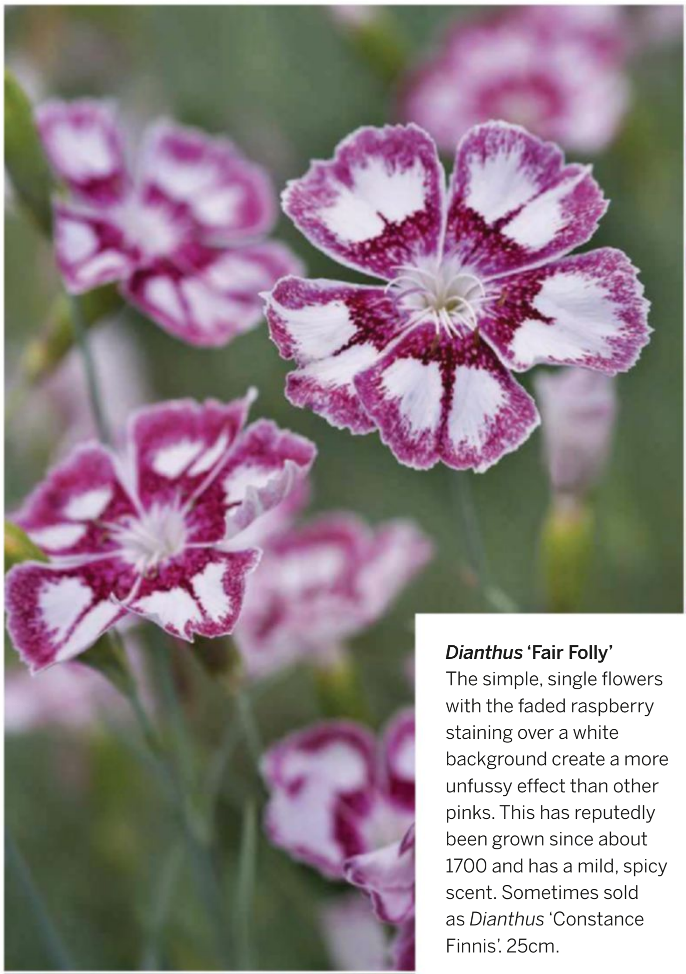
Allwoods
All of the dianthus images for this month's plant profile were taken at Allwoods in West Sussex. This specialist nursery was established by Montagu Allwood and his two brothers in 1910. Montagu bred several new varieties of pinks, many of which are still produced at the nursery that was given a new lease of life in 1994 when it was taken over by Emma and David James (above).
allwoods.net



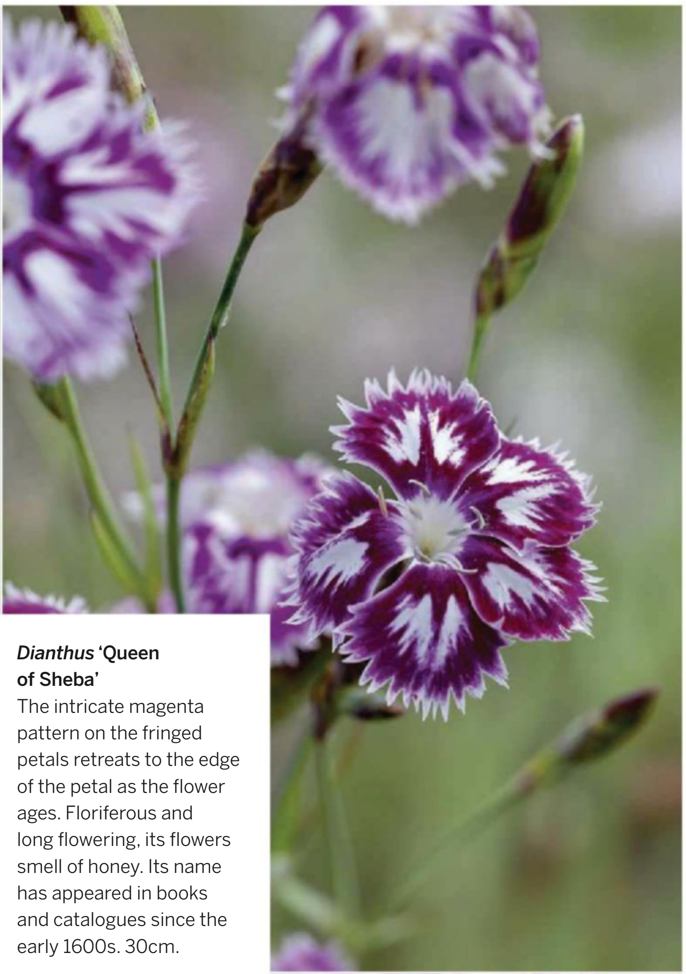
Dianthus plumarius
One of the parent plants of many hybrids. Native to Austria and Croatia, it has become naturalised in Britain on well-drained chalk soils. Although the stems are relatively short, it can spread to 50cm. 20cm. RHS H7, USDA



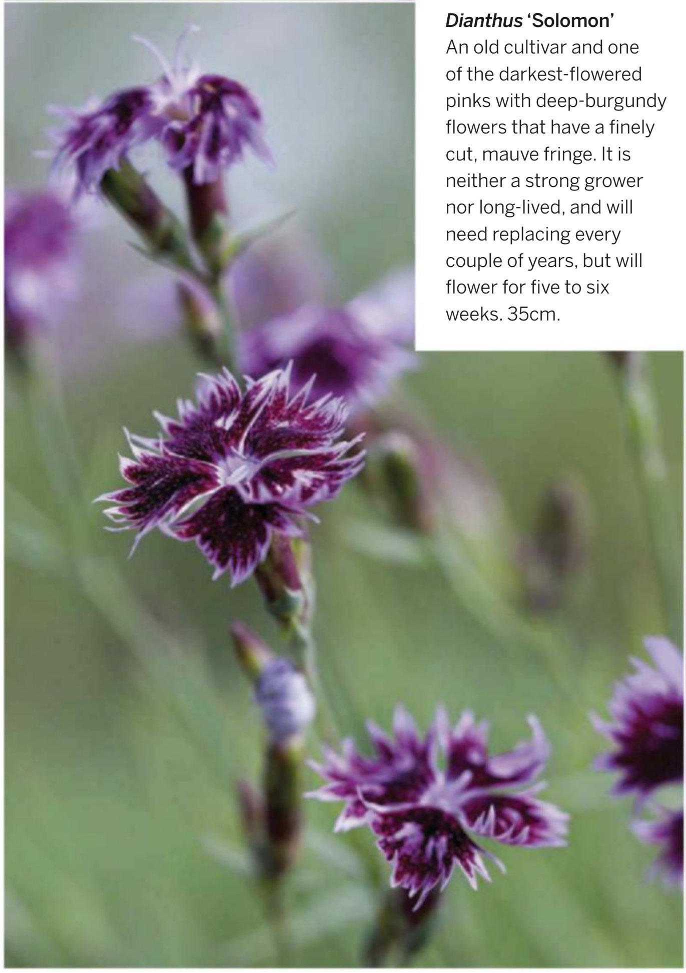
Dianthus **'Greensides'**
Dating from the early 19th century, this hybrid forms a dense, compact dome. Like most pinks that date from this period it has a very strong clove-like perfume. 25cm.



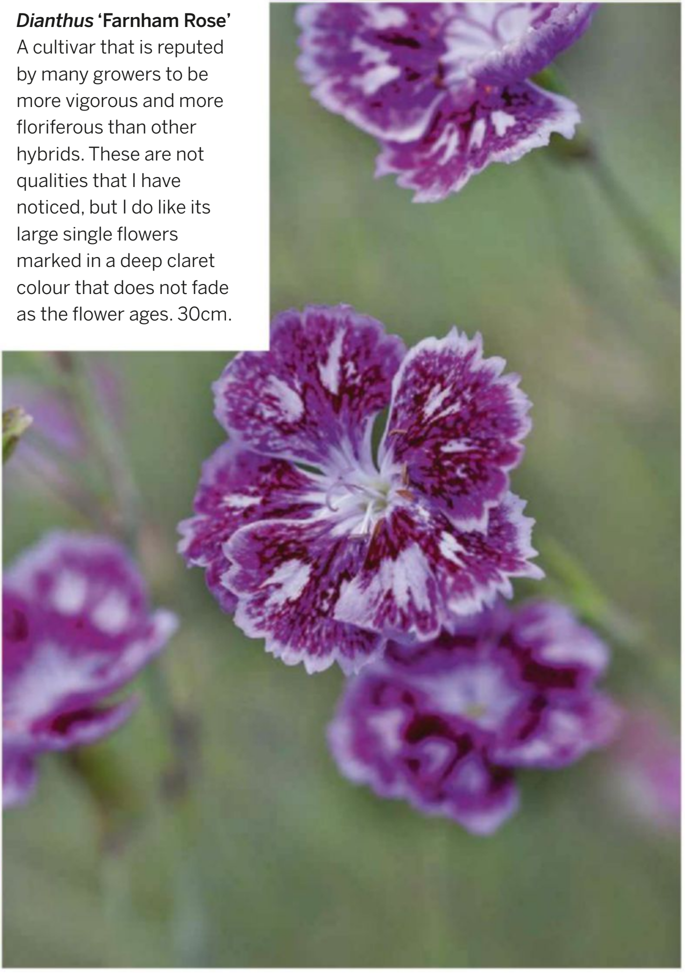
***Dianthus* ‘Fair Folly’**
The simple, single flowers with the faded raspberry staining over a white background create a more unfussy effect than other pinks. This has reputedly been grown since about 1700 and has a mild, spicy scent. Sometimes sold as *Dianthus* ‘Constance Finnis’. 25cm.



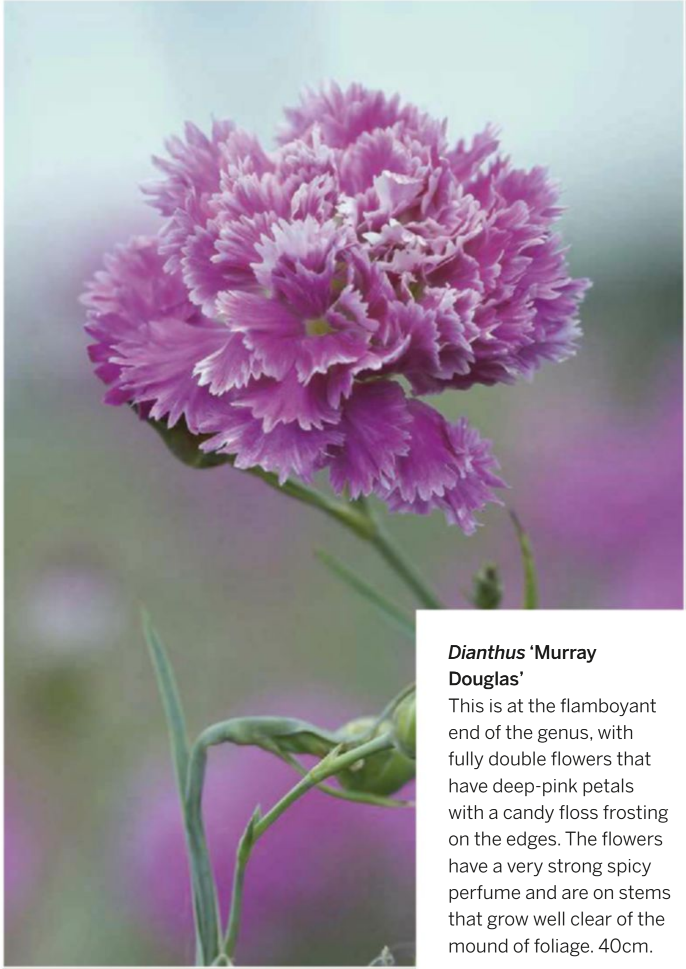
***Dianthus* ‘Queen of Sheba’**
The intricate magenta pattern on the fringed petals retreats to the edge of the petal as the flower ages. Floriferous and long flowering, its flowers smell of honey. Its name has appeared in books and catalogues since the early 1600s. 30cm.

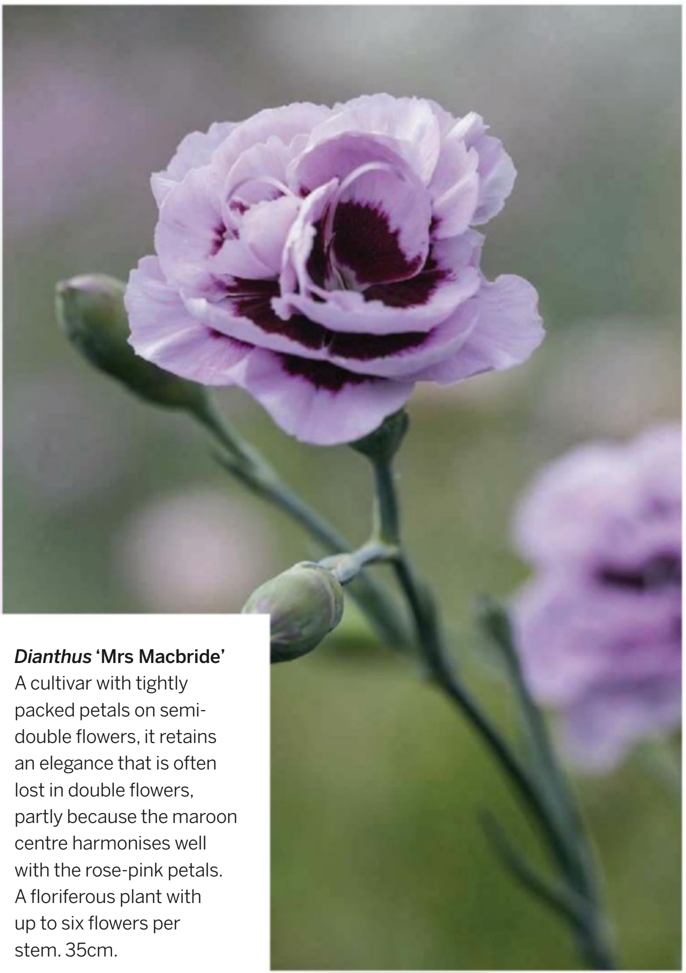


***Dianthus* ‘Solomon’**
An old cultivar and one of the darkest-flowered pinks with deep-burgundy flowers that have a finely cut, mauve fringe. It is neither a strong grower nor long-lived, and will need replacing every couple of years, but will flower for five to six weeks. 35cm.



***Dianthus* ‘Farnham Rose’**
A cultivar that is reputed by many growers to be more vigorous and more floriferous than other hybrids. These are not qualities that I have noticed, but I do like its large single flowers marked in a deep claret colour that does not fade as the flower ages. 30cm.



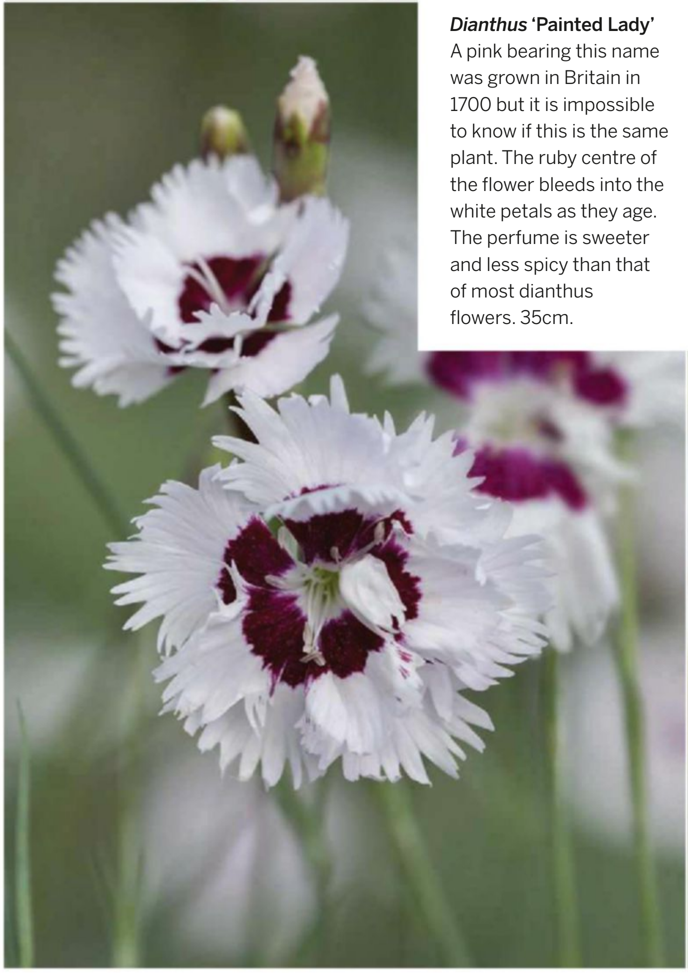


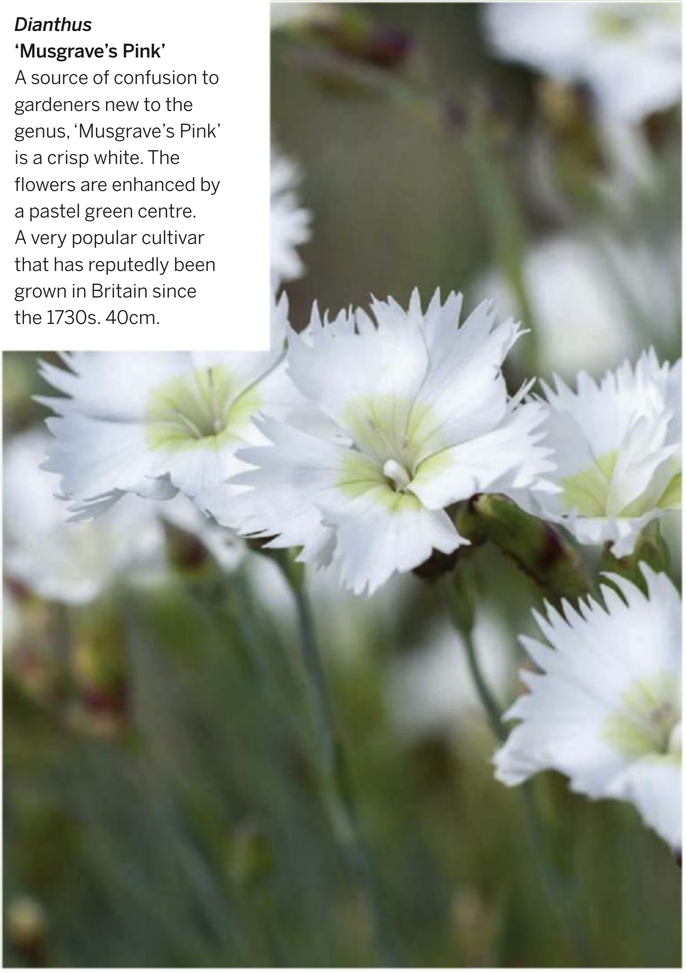
***Dianthus* 'Murray Douglas'**
This is at the flamboyant end of the genus, with fully double flowers that have deep-pink petals with a candy floss frosting on the edges. The flowers have a very strong spicy perfume and are on stems that grow well clear of the mound of foliage. 40cm.

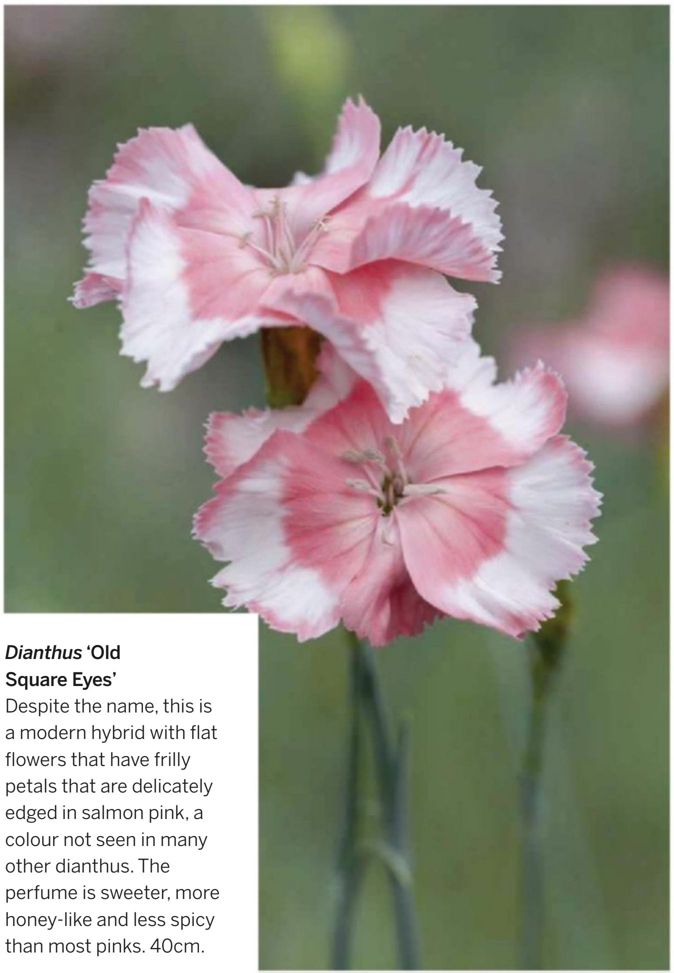
***Dianthus* 'Painted Lady'**
A pink bearing this name was grown in Britain in 1700 but it is impossible to know if this is the same plant. The ruby centre of the flower bleeds into the white petals as they age. The perfume is sweeter and less spicy than that of most dianthus flowers. 35cm.

***Dianthus* 'Mrs Macbride'**
A cultivar with tightly packed petals on semi-double flowers, it retains an elegance that is often lost in double flowers, partly because the maroon centre harmonises well with the rose-pink petals. A floriferous plant with up to six flowers per stem. 35cm.

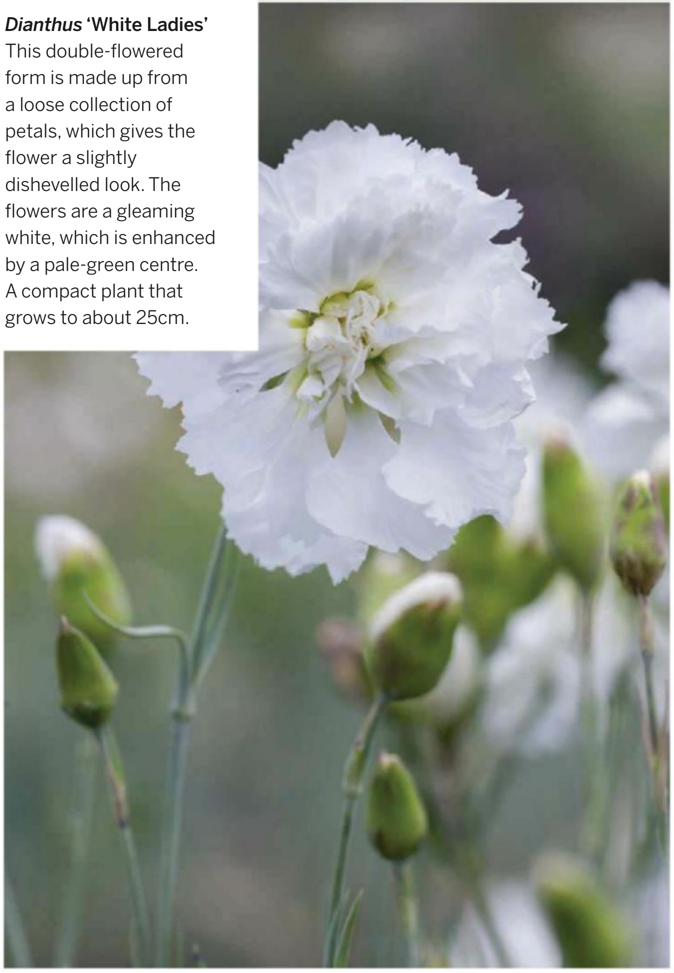
***Dianthus* 'Musgrave's Pink'**
A source of confusion to gardeners new to the genus, 'Musgrave's Pink' is a crisp white. The flowers are enhanced by a pastel green centre. A very popular cultivar that has reputedly been grown in Britain since the 1730s. 40cm.







***Dianthus* 'Old Square Eyes'**
Despite the name, this is a modern hybrid with flat flowers that have frilly petals that are delicately edged in salmon pink, a colour not seen in many other dianthus. The perfume is sweeter, more honey-like and less spicy than most pinks. 40cm.



***Dianthus* 'White Ladies'**
This double-flowered form is made up from a loose collection of petals, which gives the flower a slightly dishevelled look. The flowers are a gleaming white, which is enhanced by a pale-green centre. A compact plant that grows to about 25cm.

Cultivation

Pinks are easy to grow. They need a well-drained soil and an open, sunny situation. Both are essential: even partial shade from overhanging shrubs or other perennials will reduce flowering and in a wet soil the plants will rot. Heavy clay soils should be improved by adding lots of horticultural grit. Don't be tempted to use an organic mulch to feed pinks, as its moisture content can cause the plant to rot. By the end of summer plants can become straggly and mess, although this can be avoided by deadheading hard as the flowers fade throughout the summer, it is also a good idea to cut them back by about a third at the end of the season. I do mine in early September.

Pinks are not long-lived and after a few years plants become woody and sprawling. When that happens, dig them up and plant new ones. Some modern hybrids that are marketed as long-flowering or even perpetual flowering tend to need replacing more often, usually after just two years.

Pinks work well in pots, using a John Innes No.2 loam-based compost, mixed half-and-half with horticultural grit. They are among the easiest plants to propagate. Cuttings, taken between June and September will root quickly and make strong plants the following year. To take cuttings, known as pipings, firmly hold a non-flowering shoot in one hand just below a leaf node and pull the rest of the stem sharply with the other hand. Remove the lower leaves and you have a cutting. I learned from Mark Trenear that soaking the pipings in water overnight produces successful cuttings. Pot them into a cuttings compost, inserting them around the edge of the pot. I find that loam-based composts are more reliable than coir or peat-based ones. Keep in a shady place outdoors, in a cold frame or a cool greenhouse that is shaded from direct sunlight. After three or four weeks the pipings should be rooted and can be repotted on in 9cm pots of potting compost and grown on until the following spring.

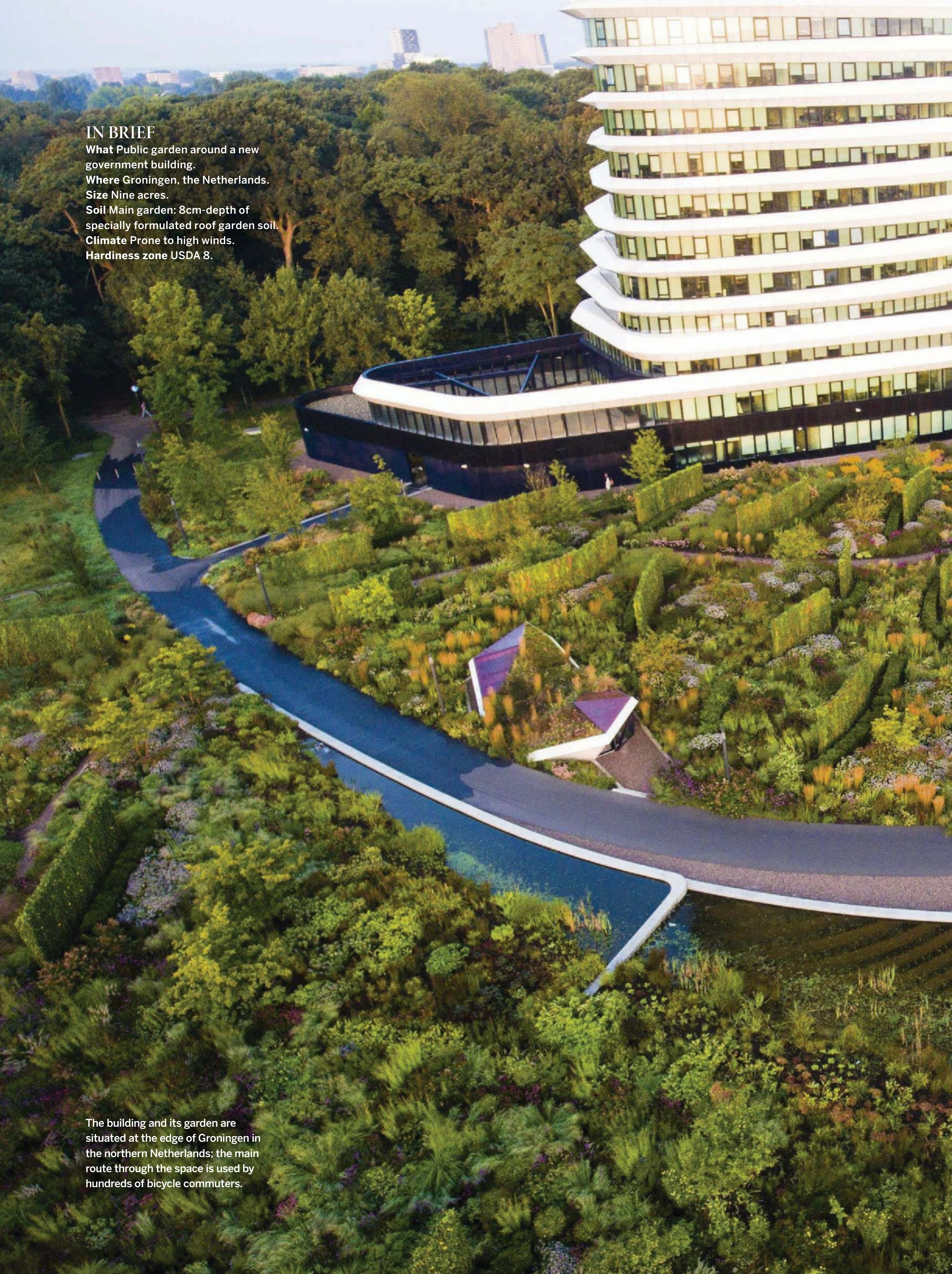
Pink pinks

The word 'pink' has been used in Britain to describe *Dianthus* since the 15th century. The exact origin of the word itself is unclear, but it is thought to refer to the pinking around the edges of the flower's petals. A less attractive possibility is that it descends from a Dutch word that describes a disease that left the eyes bloody – a reference to the red centre of many pinks.

The first recorded uses of the word to describe a colour between red and white don't appear until the early years of the 17th century. It is an indication of how widespread the plant was that its name became accepted as a description of anything that shared its colouring.

Where to buy

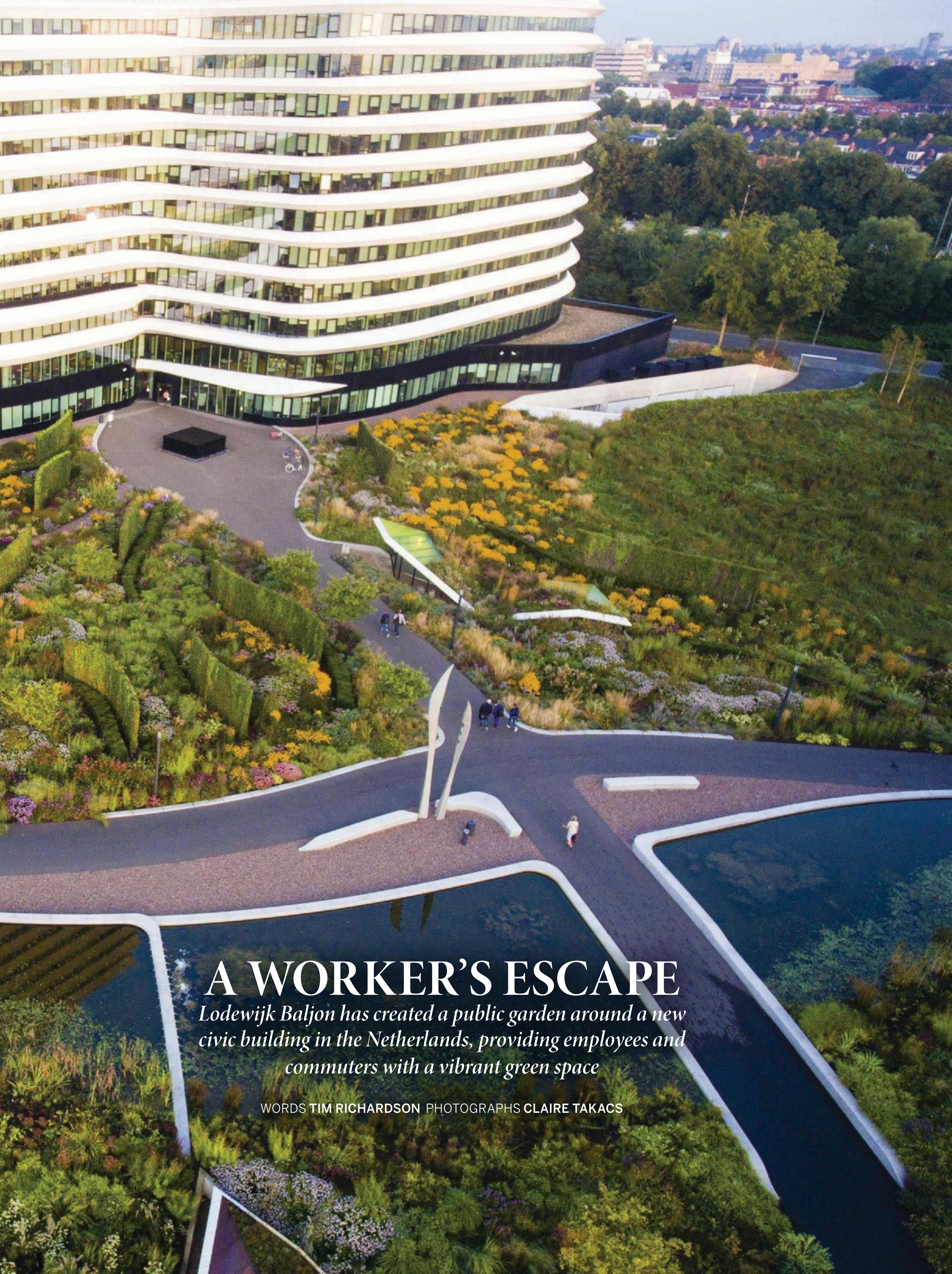
- **Allwoods**
  Summerfield Nursery,
  London Road, Hassocks,
  West Sussex BN6 9NA.
  Tel 01273 844229,
  allwoods.net
- **Beth Chatto Gardens**
  Elmstead Market
  Colchester,
  Essex CO7 7DB.
  Tel 01206 822007,
  bethchatto.co.uk
- **Hardy's Cottage Garden Plants**
  Priory Lane Nursery,
  Freefolk Priors, Whitchurch,
  Hampshire RG28 7FA.
  Tel 01256 896533,
  hardysplants.co.uk
- **Whetmans Pinks**
  Houndspool, Ashcombe
  Dawlish, Devon EX7 0QP.
  Tel 01626 863328,
  whetmanpinks.com



IN BRIEF

What Public garden around a new government building.
Where Groningen, the Netherlands.
Size Nine acres.
Soil Main garden: 8cm-depth of specially formulated roof garden soil.
Climate Prone to high winds.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

The building and its garden are situated at the edge of Groningen in the northern Netherlands; the main route through the space is used by hundreds of bicycle commuters.

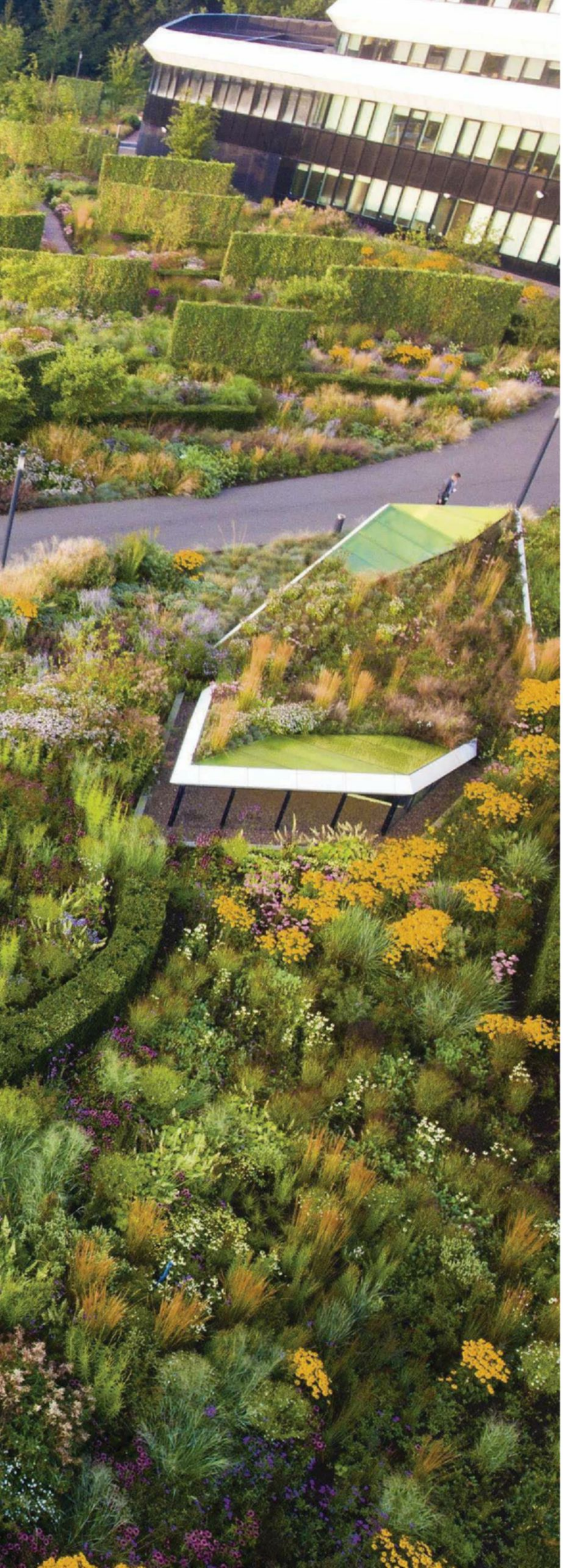


A WORKER'S ESCAPE

Lodewijk Baljon has created a public garden around a new civic building in the Netherlands, providing employees and commuters with a vibrant green space

WORDS **TIM RICHARDSON** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**

IN EFFECT LODEWIJK HAS CREATED NOT A PUBLIC PARK, BUT A MASSIVE GARDEN, PLANTED IN THE NATURALISTIC STYLE THAT IS NOW SO FAMILIAR



Should a new government building have a garden, and one that is freely open to the public? Readers of this magazine will probably say ‘yes’, but that has not been the tradition – and not just because of a lack of money. In the 19th century neo-classical architecture was used to reinforce civic power (grand squares dotted with statues and fountain pools), while in the 20th century a bland and corporate Modernism became the standard style for official buildings, occasionally with a ‘plaza-style’ landscape design attached.

The city of Groningen in the northern Netherlands is demonstrating how different things can be with a large garden-park set around a striking new building, housing a government tax and education office with 2,700 employees. It is situated at the edge of ancient oak woodland next to a busy ring road, and incorporates well-used commuter walking and cycling routes. The routes taken by the local bird and bat populations have also been protected and enhanced; they were marked on all design plans. It is an actively used and appreciated public space.

Amsterdam-based landscape designer Lodewijk Baljon was commissioned to create this new ‘city garden’ to wrap around the striking, 92m-high main building. In effect he has created not a public park, but a massive garden, planted in the naturalistic style that is now so familiar. As he says, “It’s a public building but it feels like a garden – that has been our aim.”

Any landscape design first had to react to the building itself, with its strident black and white horizontal banding. Lodewijk extended the fluid lines and curves of the architecture into the landscape with sinuous drift plantings and groups of multi-stem *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*, hornbeam and *Malus* ‘Evereste’ ▷

To continue turn to page 61

Left The garden was designed to incorporate already established walking and cycling routes and even takes into account the flight paths of bats and birds. The green structures are ivy-clad steel-mesh windbreaks. These calm the wind in the garden, making it more peaceful, and provide an architectural foil to the building.

DESIGNING FOR PEOPLE

Sage advice from some masters of garden design, on designing spaces for public use:

‘The park has been established in the city to represent and recall the absent country.’

Jens Jensen (1860-1951), Danish-American naturalistic planting pioneer.

‘It should be a ground which invites, encourages and facilitates movement.’

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), designer of Central Park, New York.

‘Communities, cities, and most importantly individuals, derive their self-image as citizens from these public spaces.’

Martha Schwartz, contemporary American landscape architect.

‘Flow is an essential character of the landscape tradition of design, and one which is often ignored.’

Sylvia Crowe (1901-1997), English landscape architect.

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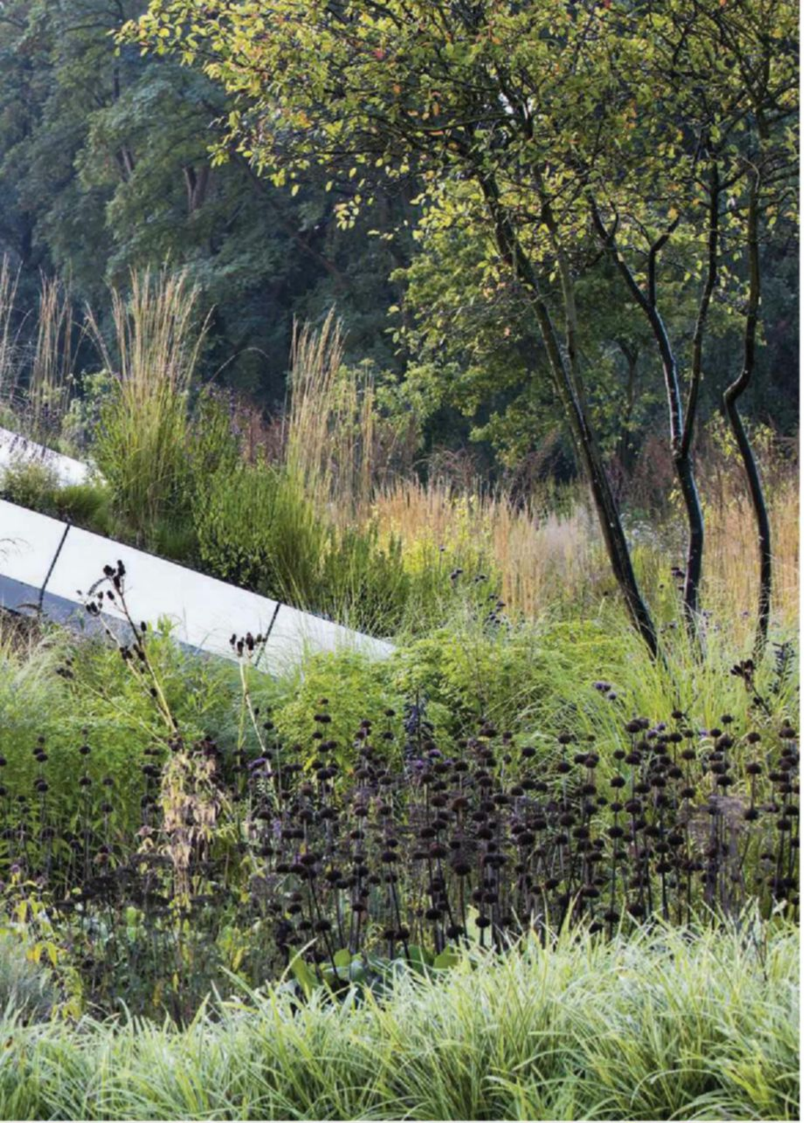
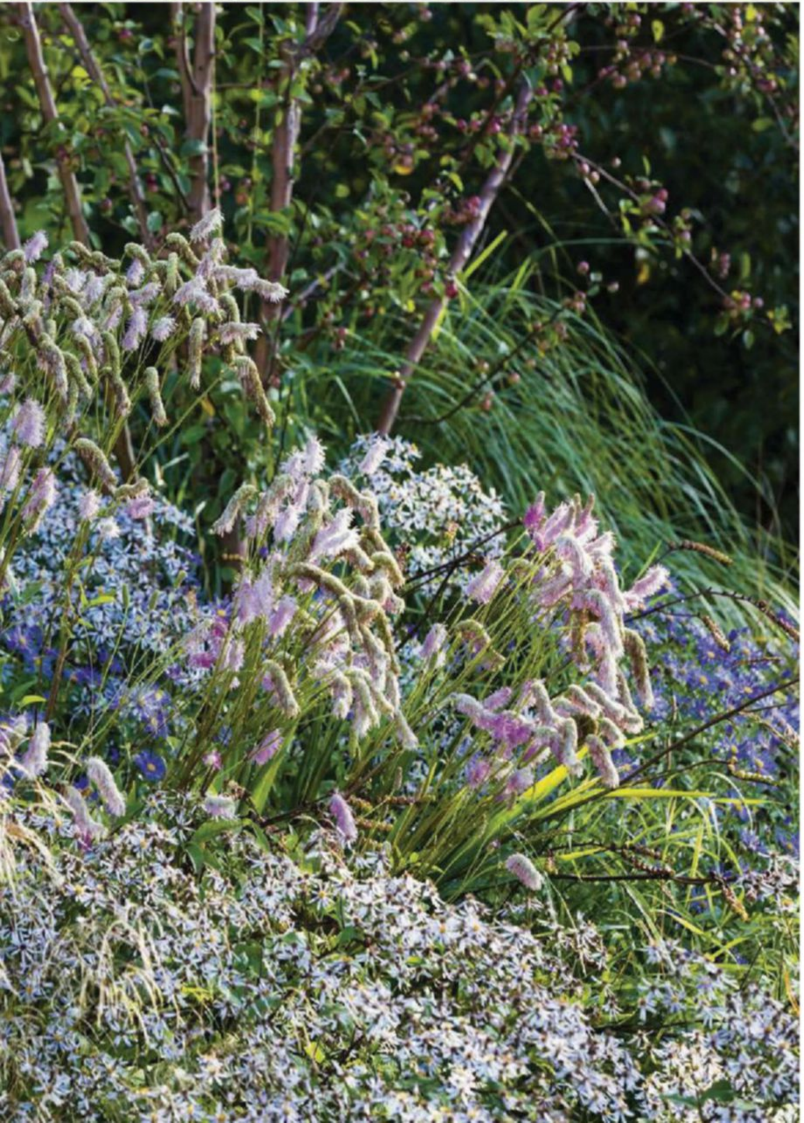




ANY DESIGN FIRST HAD TO REACT TO THE BUILDING ITSELF. LODEWIJK EXTENDED THE FLUID LINES AND CURVES WITH SINUOUS DRIFT PLANTINGS

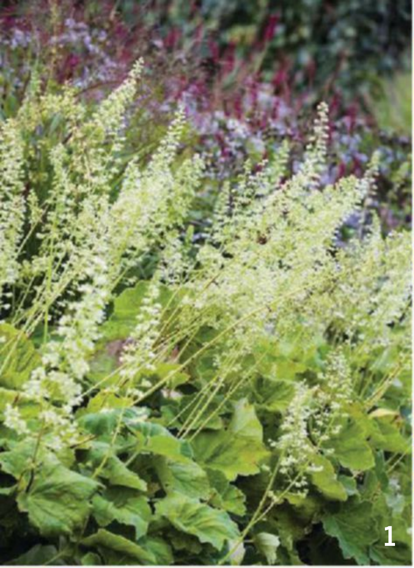
Planting combinations

➊ Purple *Verbena bonariensis* plays off golden *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' in this perennial planting, which morphs into the indigenous flower meadow visible in the background. Contrasting forms of *Heuchera villosa* var. *macrorhiza*, *Panicum virgatum* and the daisy-like *Kalimeris incisa* 'Alba' add to the impression of burgeoning vitality.

➋ The dead trumps the living in this combination. Here the dark, almost black, seedheads of *Phlomis russeliana* take centre stage, surrounded by *Agastache* 'Blue Fortune', *Eryngium agavifolium*, *Carex oshimensis*, *Carex muskingumensis* and *Pennisetum alopecuroides*. Just coming into bloom on the left is *Symphyotrichum* 'Little Carlow'. The metal structure is a light and ventilation unit for the underground car park, with *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' and *Aster trifoliatus* subsp. *ageratoides* 'Ezo Murasaki' growing on top.

➌ The strong shapes of grass seedheads and late-summer flowers are the key here, creating an impression of shape and mass, which is not always associated with late-summer perennial plantings. Visible are *Sanguisorba obtusa*, *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch', *Deschampsia cespitosa* 'Goldtau', *Aster macrophyllus* and *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer' (after flowering). The stems and crab apples of *Malus* 'Evereste' form the backdrop.

➍ Clipped hedges and a multi-stem tree, *Amelanchier lamarckii*, create structural interest in the late summer garden. This sense of form is offset by the complexity of a combination of *Echinacea purpurea* 'Alaska', *Persicaria*, *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah', *Aster* x *frikartii* 'Mönch' and *Eurybia macrophylla*.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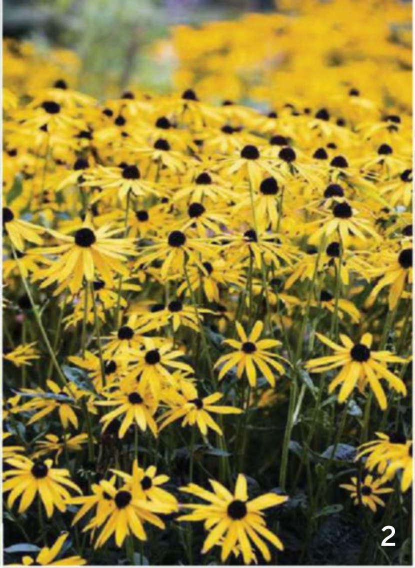
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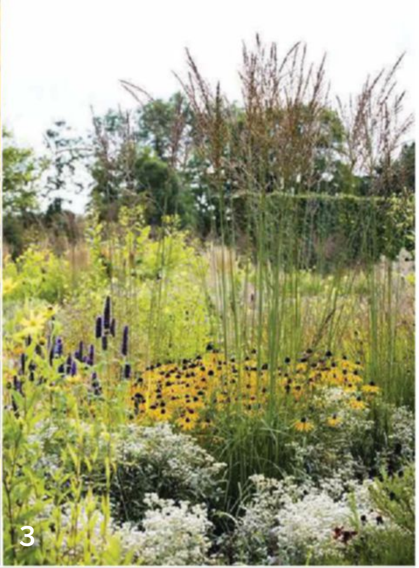
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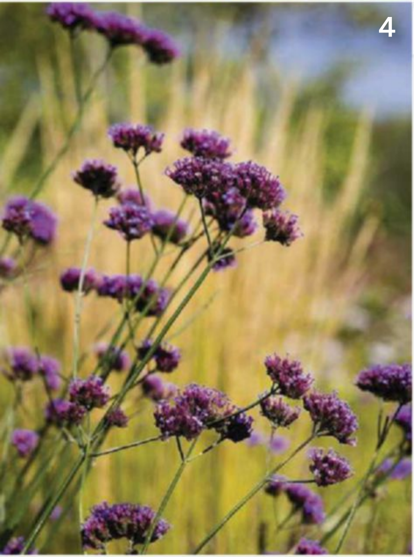
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8 KEY PLANTS FROM THE CITY GARDEN

1 *Heuchera villosa* var. *macrorhiza*
The large, light-green leaves grab the attention in spring. Then follows a long flowering season, until frost, with pleasant cream-coloured flower plumes. The suitability for part shade and sun makes this *Heuchera* easy going. It is a plant that should be used more. 90cm. USDA 3a-8b[†].

2 *Rudbeckia missouriensis*
The low version of 'Goldsturm' with an equally intense warm yellow bloom from late June to late September. When combining both, an interesting depth of perspective can be created. 50cm. USDA 5a-8b.

3 *Molinia caerulea* subsp. *arundinacea* 'Transparent'
One of the taller varieties, it colours beautifully at the end of the summer to orange brown. Position so that the light comes from behind it. Works well in combinations. Lodewijk takes it for granted that it will fall over in the Dutch winds by the end of winter. 1.8m. USDA 5a-8b.

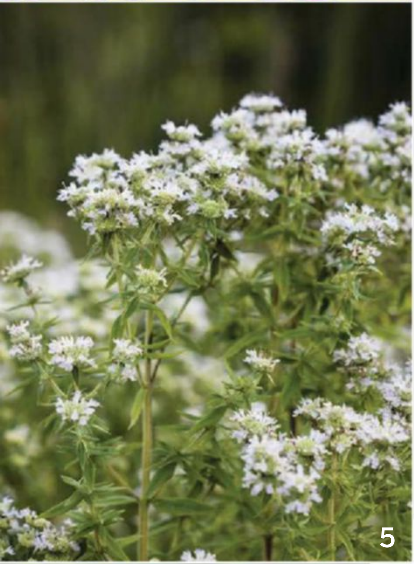
4 *Verbena bonariensis*
Lodewijk has used this frequently here. It does not live long, but is excellent for giving extra colour in the first years. If given the chance to self-seed, it will keep showing up. 2m. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 7a-11.

5 *Pycnanthemum pilosum*
Lodewijk calls this a good 'filler'. It smells deliciously of mint. The plant blends easily between others, and is less rampant than real mint (*Mentha*). 1.5m. USDA 4a-8b.

6 *Vernonia arkansana* 'Mammuth'
The violet purple umbels create a good contrast to the dark-green ivy screens and it gives a nice upward silhouette. A bold plant that needs some years to fully develop. Its vigour is fascinating to watch. As with most plants used in this garden, it attracts bees and butterflies, adding to its interest. 1.5m.

7 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Maxima'
Perhaps the only *Echinacea* that doesn't let its petals hang down. A strong purple rose colour, selected in the Netherlands. 1.5m. USDA 3a-8b.

8 *Persicaria amplexicaulis* 'Firetail'
Ideal for the 'meadow look' when combined with ornamental grasses. It casually weaves a thread of crimson through other plants. On top of that, it has a long bloom period. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-7b.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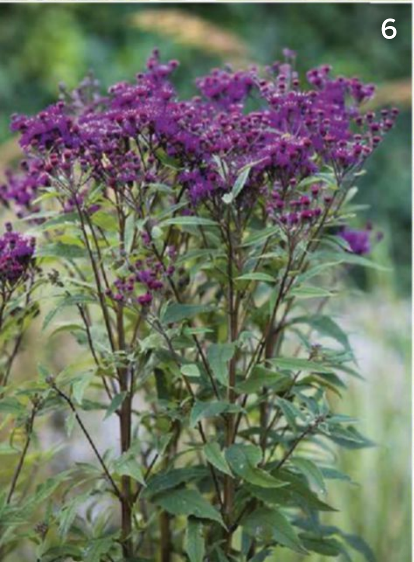
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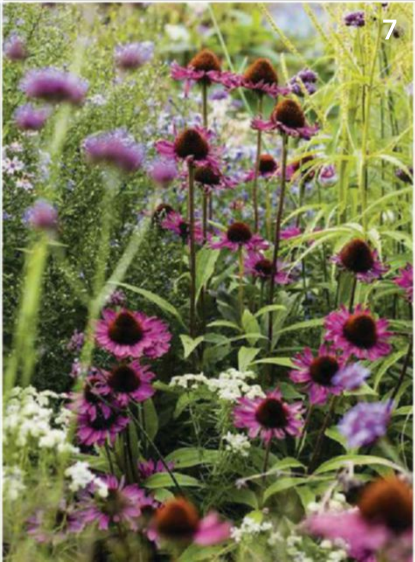
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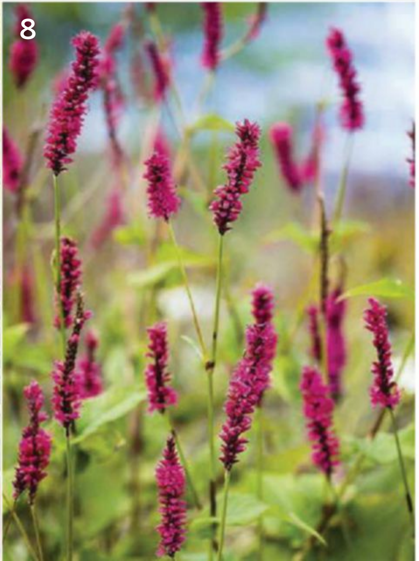
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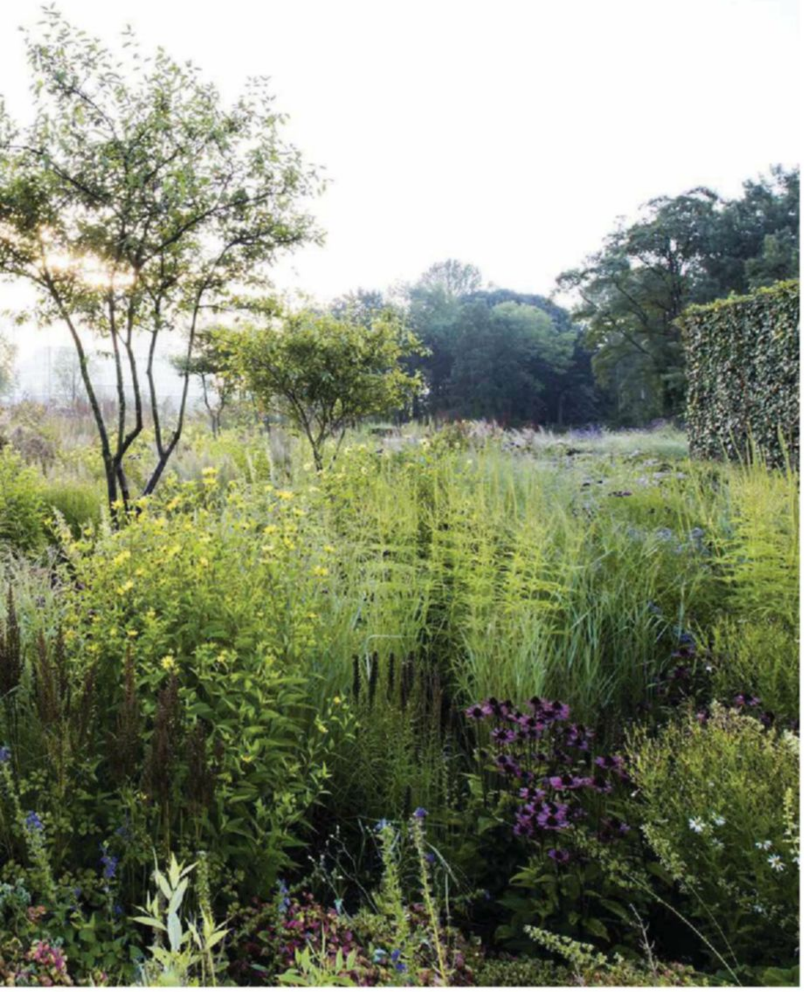
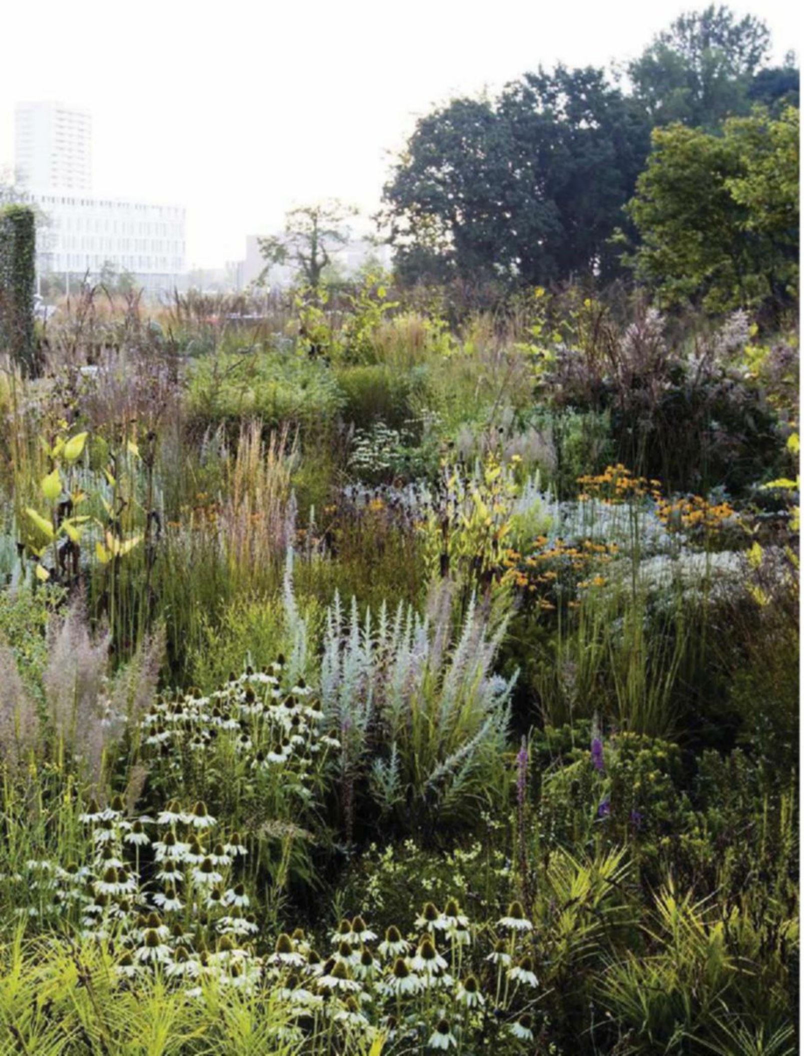
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. [†]Hardiness ratings given where available.





WHEN IT CAME TO PLANT CHOICE, SHRUBS AND TREES WERE TESTED IN A WIND TUNNEL

▷ trees. He says he chose multi-stem trees because "even a full-grown single-stem would always look small next to the building". He likes the idea of the canopies 'bubbling away' in the garden and looks forward to their maturity, when their branches will frame lateral views across the space.

The designer also reacted to the architecture by means of a series of 3m-high, curved steel-mesh screens covered in ivy. These have the effect of creating a human scale against the building and make informal enclosures, while also acting as windbreaks: the site is beset by high winds, which the screens help to control, as do a series of clipped yew hedges.

The wind also proved a challenge when it came to plant choice – prospective shrubs and trees were actually tested in a wind tunnel. In the event some 55,000 perennial plants in 200 species were used, as well as 40,000 bulbs.

Key linking perennials, deployed in giant beds that morph into each other, include *Persicaria* x *fennica* 'Johanniswolke', phlomis, sedum, salvia, veronicastrum, euphorbia, achillea and coreopsis, as well as a palette of grasses. Even in this large acreage – the garden is 11,000 square metres, with substantial meadow and woodland areas adjacent – Lodewijk has managed to instil a feeling of intimacy, as his richly naturalistic plantings ebb and flow with the seasons and create their own sense of enclosure. The nearer one gets to the building, the more garden-like it feels and the more detailed the planting.

The fact that the main ornamental garden had to be situated on the roof of a vast underground parking garage was turned to the designer's advantage. Beneath an 8cm-depth of specially formulated, roof-garden soil is a layer of nutrient-rich substrate. "The roots have to go so far down, we can be sure they will be anchored in the high winds," Lodewijk says.

Water is also treated semi-naturalistically, in the form of a series of large pools. These pools are used to recycle rainwater and contain substantial waterside plantings including flag iris, lysimachia, *Menyanthes trifoliata*, juncus and equisetum. The smooth granite edges of the pools create informal sitting places popular with locals, who like to watch the fish. Who would have thought a visit to a tax office could be so relaxing? □

USEFUL INFORMATION
Address Stadstuin, Kempkensberg, Groningen, the Netherlands.

You can find out more about Lodewijk's work at **baljon.nl**

Left above Lodewijk has introduced a range of multi-stemmed trees into the scheme, including *Amelanchier* x *lamarckii*, *Malus* 'Evereste' and hornbeam. The trees help to add height and structure to an otherwise flat site.

Left below The key principle in the design is repetition. Perennials, such as echinacea and coreopsis help to create a rhythm in the planting, which inspires a sense of tranquillity.

HORTICULTURAL WHO'S WHO

ISABEL AND JULIAN BANNERMAN

Lyrical, theatrical and playful, this husband and wife design team inject energy and drama into Britain's grandest gardens

WORDS **AMBRA EDWARDS** PORTRAIT **CHARLIE HOPKINSON**

For every teenage boy who loathes school, for whom GCSE maths is an insurmountable obstacle, and who bumbles out into the world with no clear idea of what to do next, travelling here and there, turning his hand to this and that – for this boy (or maybe his mother) Julian Bannerman is a shining beacon.

He has made not one successful career, but two (his bar, Bannerman's, was the place to see and be seen in 1980s Edinburgh). He has made influential friends: he hobnobs with dukes and princes, holidays with fashion icons, and even the haughtiest grandes dames of British horticulture have been melted by his easy charm.

And, most importantly, he got the girl. When a beautiful and talented history of art student, a decade and more his junior, walked into his bar, he fell instantly in love with her eyes the colour of an English sea, and within months she had resolved to join him in his rackety life.

Married life began at The Ivy, described by Isabel as a "capricious architectural starlet of a house", a derelict 1727 baroque extravaganza marooned among the new housing estates of Chippenham. Here they lived on the payment they received for taking in spoil from the massive redevelopment going on around them in the town. They shaped it into mounds to hide the ugly little houses and planted a double lime avenue – clearly a higher priority than a flushing lavatory or a kitchen sink. It was their first landscaping project together. It was at The Ivy that they made two new friends who would figure large in their lives; painter and antiquarian David Vicary and writer and historian Candida Lycett Green.

> WE COULDN'T STOP EVEN IF WE WANTED TO, THERE ARE STILL SO MANY IDEAS TO BE EXPLORED

Julian paints a colourful picture of Vicary, an eccentric figure living like Miss Havisham among his cobwebbed treasures, but with a connoisseur's eye and an encyclopaedic knowledge of old houses and gardens, which he was glad to share with his eager young neighbours. "I learned so much from him," says Julian. "He taught me how to look."

It was for Candida Lycett Green that Julian and Isabel built their first folly – a curious summerhouse of flint and broken brick. Delighted, she showed her friends, and the Bannermans' path in life was set. Within the year they were at work for the Rothschilds at Waddesdon Manor, restoring a lost 19th-century rock and water garden – a job that expanded into designing an award-winning office complex. Next, for the Getty family, they made a Piranesi-style ruined tunnel and a spine-tingling oaken temple in the woods (it would become a Bannerman trademark to treat green oak as if it were stone). But it was their 'stumpery' for HRH The Prince of Wales at Highgrove that propelled them into the limelight – a hosta garden metamorphosed into a dreamlike woodland retreat.

The Prince has described the Bannermans as the heirs of the 18th-century landscape architect William Kent. "He's joking," says Julian hastily. But you see what he means. They can do Kent's theatrical opulence (as at Arundel Castle), but also his delicious lightness of touch, as in their playful circuit walk at Woolbeding in West Sussex. And they can do lyricism and romance in spades, not least in their own gardens. Over 18 years they made a fabulously atmospheric garden at Hanham Court near Bristol, the ruin that succeeded The Ivy. Then in 2012 they moved again, this time to a castle in Cornwall.

"Madness," admits Isabel. "We were meant to be downsizing…" Already the ancient walls are swagged with her beloved old roses, and lavish scented borders have been coaxed out of the thin, shaley soil. Peonies and iris spangle the gravelled entrance court, and a phalanx of banana palms stands guard by the watchtower. This garden alone would be a full-time occupation: the energy of this pair is boundless.

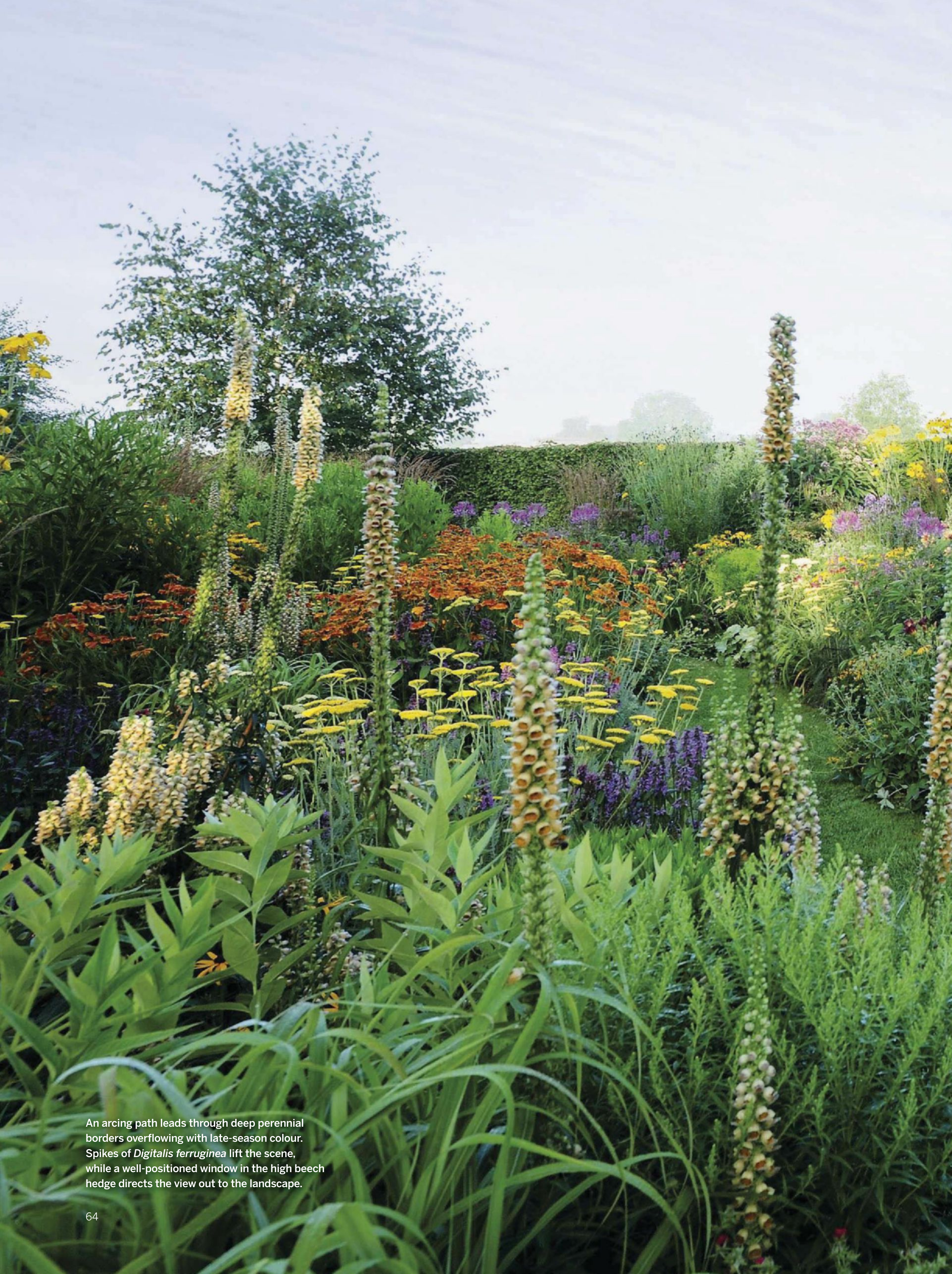
"We couldn't stop even if we wanted to," laughs Isabel. "We haven't got a pension." And besides, there are still so many ideas to be explored. Just as in the 18th century, the Bannermans' gardens are theatres of experiment. Garden buildings, Isabel points out, offer a freedom to play with architectural conceits that would never be viable on a bigger scale. But she is at pains to explain that these are but 'divertimenti' in a larger endeavour – creating a landscape that is not only visually, but emotionally rich – a personal Eden where people can live out their dreams.

"People think we're just about wacky buildings, and we're not," says Julian, momentarily downcast. On the contrary, he dreams of making a landscape with ne'er a building in it – a deep green valley with a river rushing through it, where he would shape a waterfall with a walkway behind it, so they could stand behind the crash and thunder. Around it, they'd plant nothing but ferns. What need would there be of anything more? Except somewhere, surely, Isabel would find a spot to plant a single, swoonily scented rambling rose. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

I&J Bannerman, Trematon Castle, Saltash, Cornwall PL12 4QW.
bannermandesign.com
Trematon Castle gardens are open from May to September.

NEXT MONTH Plantsman Keith Wiley of Wildside Nursery.

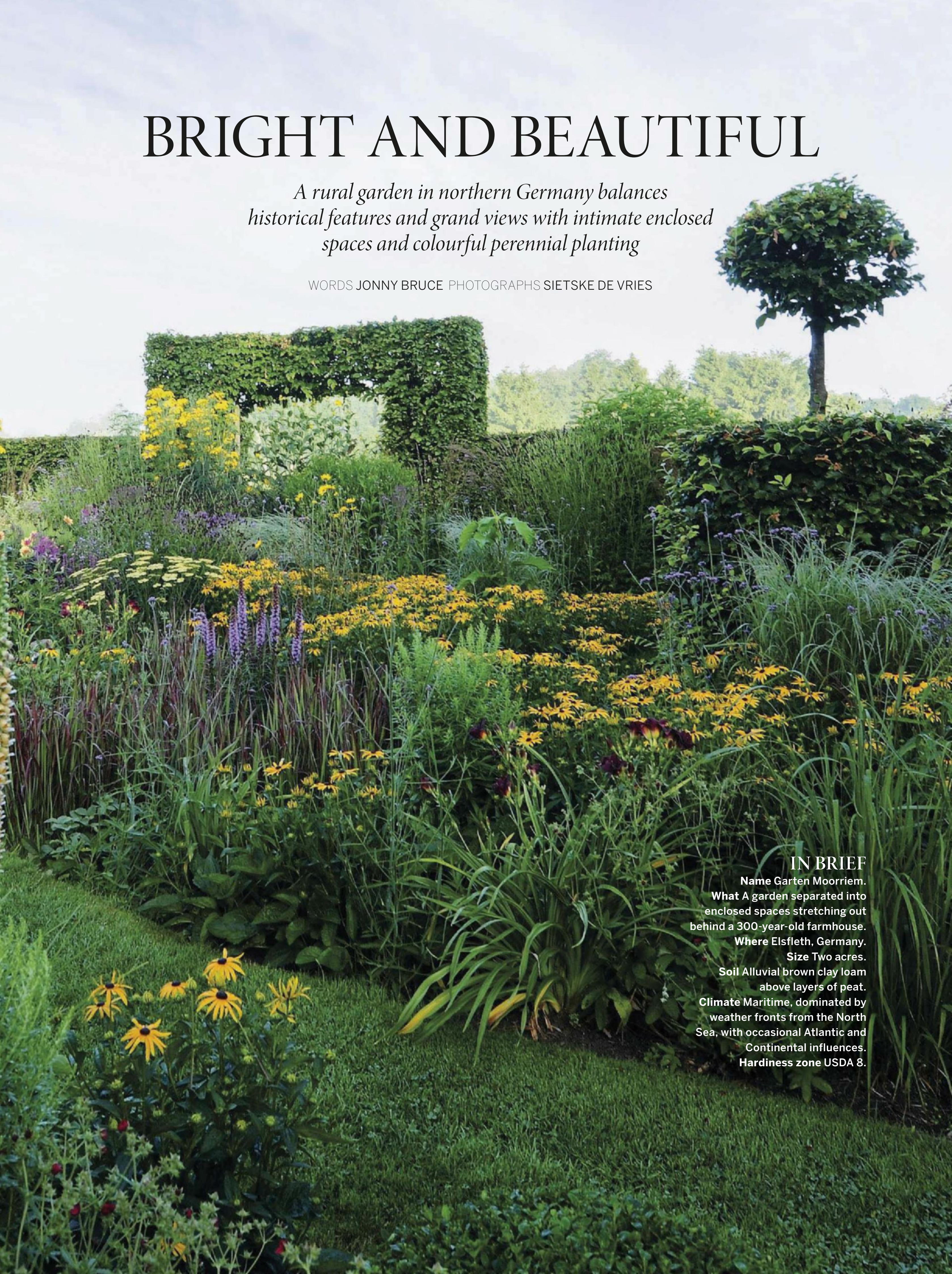


An arcing path leads through deep perennial borders overflowing with late-season colour. Spikes of *Digitalis ferruginea* lift the scene, while a well-positioned window in the high beech hedge directs the view out to the landscape.

BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

A rural garden in northern Germany balances historical features and grand views with intimate enclosed spaces and colourful perennial planting

WORDS JONNY BRUCE PHOTOGRAPHS SIETSKE DE VRIES



IN BRIEF

Name Garten Moorriem.
What A garden separated into enclosed spaces stretching out behind a 300-year-old farmhouse.
Where Elsfleth, Germany.
Size Two acres.
Soil Alluvial brown clay loam above layers of peat.
Climate Maritime, dominated by weather fronts from the North Sea, with occasional Atlantic and Continental influences.
Hardiness zone USDA 8.

In 2006 Ute and Albrecht Ziburski exchanged urban life for a piece of German countryside. After years of visiting gardens all over Europe, they had a clear idea of what they what wanted. The resulting design is as easily read as a well-written book. While many of us approach our gardens with a whimsical sense of experimentation, Ute and Albrecht have in Garten Moorriem created a reminder of what you can achieve when you stick to the plan.

"We are totally unromantic about this garden," says Albrecht. Such pragmatism comes from having worked as a university botanist, where he developed an understanding of how plant communities work in the wild. Together, he and Ute started formulating ideas for their dream garden, one that would combine artistic flair with naturalistic plantings. Inspired by private gardens they had seen in Britain, France and the Netherlands, they realised they too could open their garden and make it a commercial success.

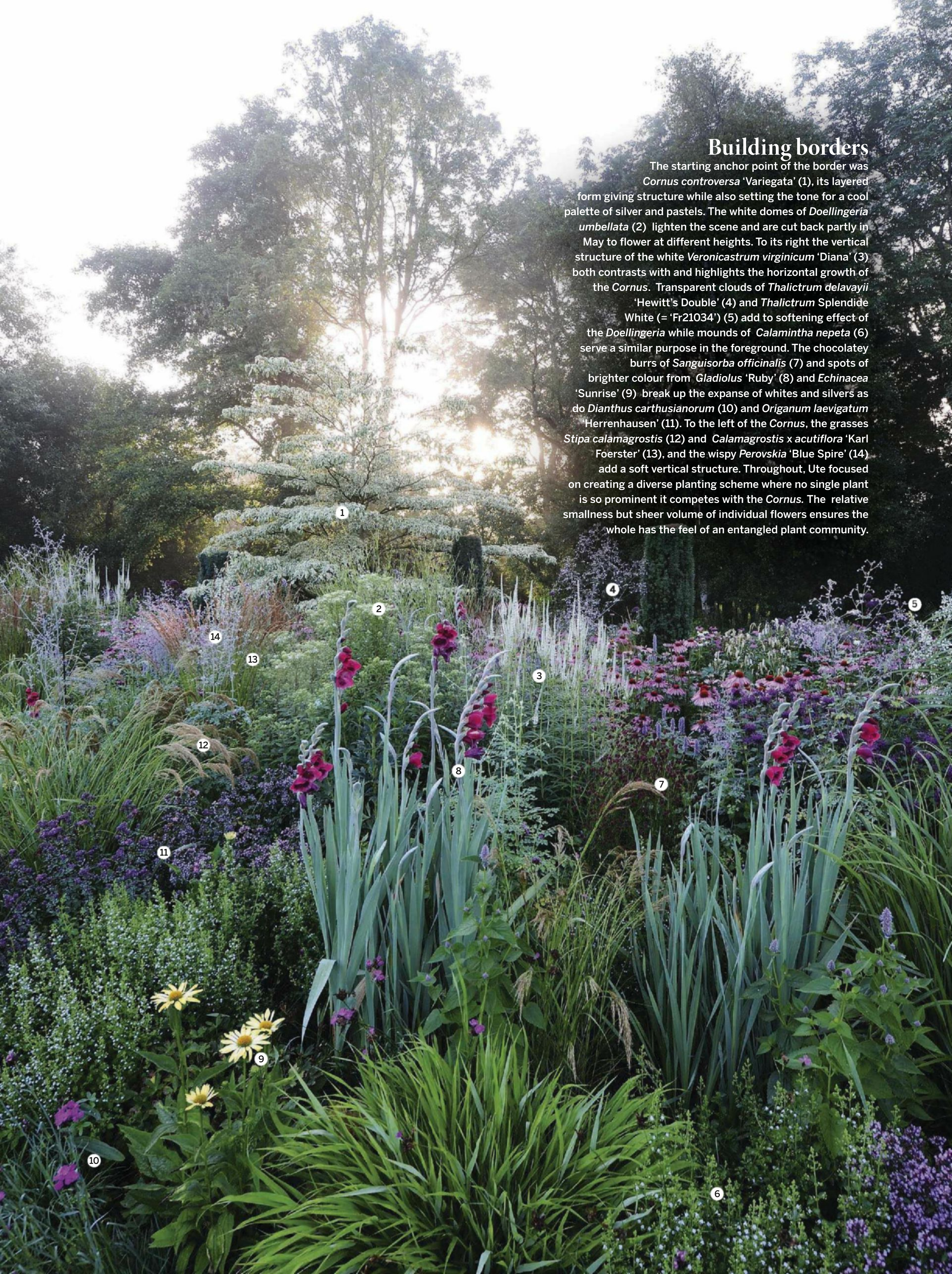
Nothing was left to chance when it came to identifying a suitable site. Ute notes how they "became famous with the estate agents in the area", soil-testing kit and borer in hand. What they discovered in the famous farming area of Moorriem was a beautiful 300-year-old farmhouse with a soil of alluvial loam above layers of peat. It was this rich and moisture-retentive soil that made the cows fat and the farmers of Moorriem rich. The Ziburskis are particularly attached to this history, and were adamant that it should inform the garden.

Traditionally the fertile land in front of the property was reserved for grazing, while behind the house fruit trees – originally grown as status symbols rather than for their crop – created a shaded area for receiving guests and drinking coffee. From this peaceful setting, the eye is drawn down a strong central axis – a feature taken from the small Berlin garden of the German impressionist painter Max Liebermann – which cuts through the staggered hedges of the next two garden areas. The first of these, known as the June Garden, is a traditional garden, filled with what Ute refers to as 'garden classics', such as roses and ▷

To continue turn to page 70

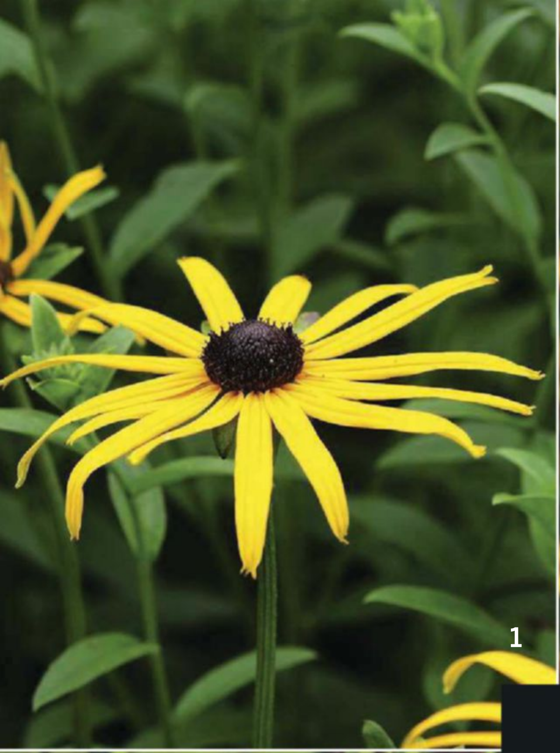
THE GARDEN IS A REMINDER OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED BY STICKING TO THE PLAN

The Summer Garden is dominated by a vibrant mix of oranges, yellows and reds, including *Helenium* 'Waltraut', *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' and *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer'.



Building borders

The starting anchor point of the border was *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' (1), its layered form giving structure while also setting the tone for a cool palette of silver and pastels. The white domes of *Doellingeria umbellata* (2) lighten the scene and are cut back partly in May to flower at different heights. To its right the vertical structure of the white *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Diana' (3) both contrasts with and highlights the horizontal growth of the *Cornus*. Transparent clouds of *Thalictrum delavayii* 'Hewitt's Double' (4) and *Thalictrum* Splendide White (= 'Fr21034') (5) add to softening effect of the *Doellingeria* while mounds of *Calamintha nepeta* (6) serve a similar purpose in the foreground. The chocolatey burrs of *Sanguisorba officinalis* (7) and spots of brighter colour from *Gladiolus* 'Ruby' (8) and *Echinacea* 'Sunrise' (9) break up the expanse of whites and silvers as do *Dianthus carthusianorum* (10) and *Origanum laevigatum* 'Herrenhausen' (11). To the left of the *Cornus*, the grasses *Stipa calamagrostis* (12) and *Calamagrostis x acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' (13), and the wispy *Perovskia* 'Blue Spire' (14) add a soft vertical structure. Throughout, Ute focused on creating a diverse planting scheme where no single plant is so prominent it competes with the *Cornus.* The relative smallness but sheer volume of individual flowers ensures the whole has the feel of an entangled plant community.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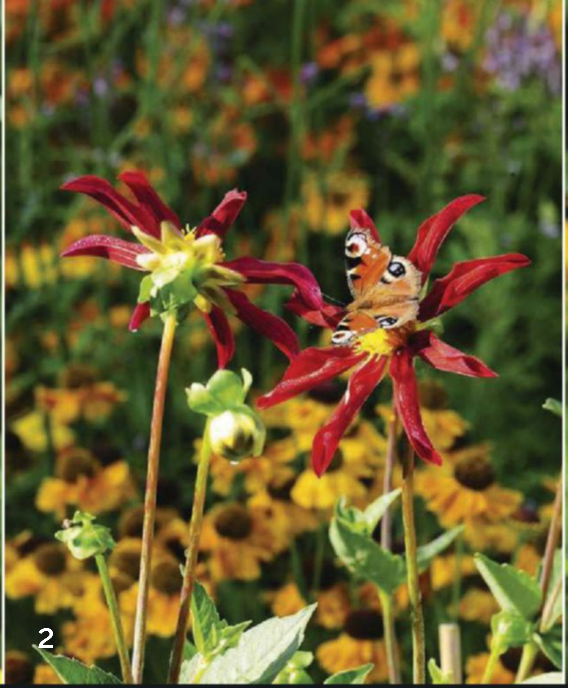
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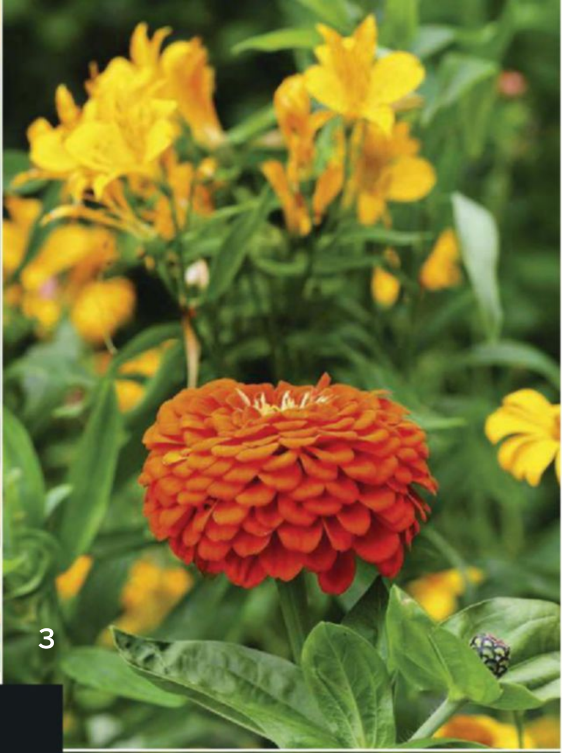
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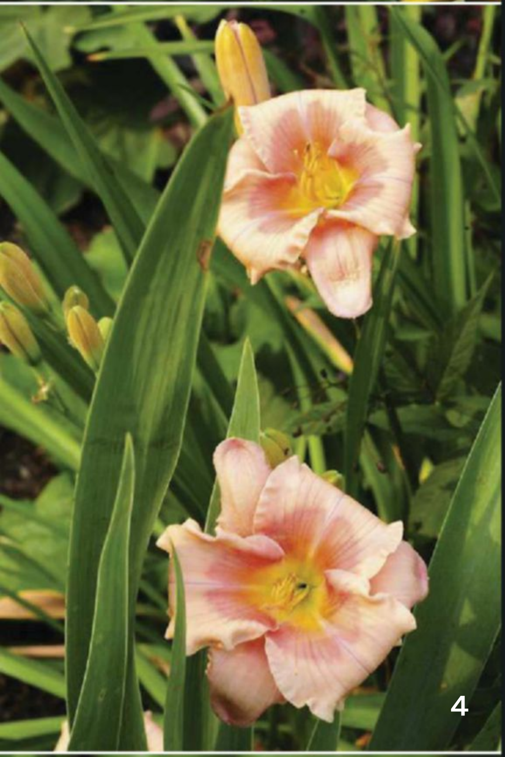
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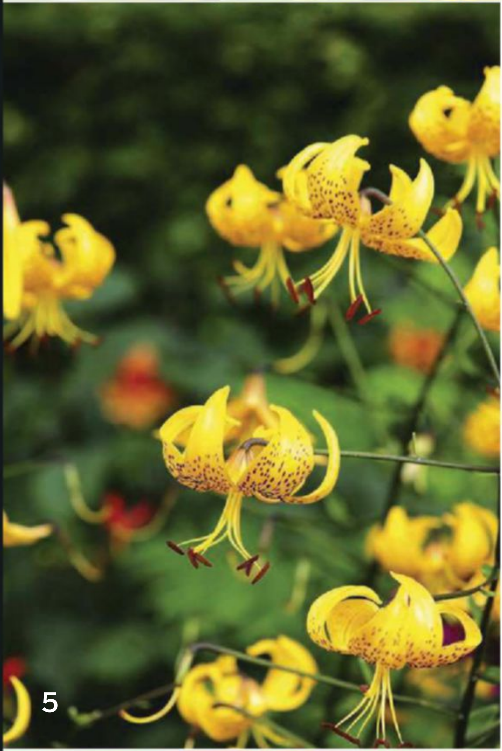
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HOT COLOURS

1 *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm'
Compact but strong, with black-eyed, deep-yellow flowers and persistent seedheads in winter. 60cm. AGM*. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b†.

2 *Dahlia* 'Marie Schnugg'
Distinctive red star-type dahlia with slightly twisted petals. 1.8m. AGM. RHS H3.

3 *Zinnia elegans* 'Benary's Giant Orange'
The tallest and brightest of zinnias. A tender annual, it has huge blooms on sturdy stems. 1.8m.

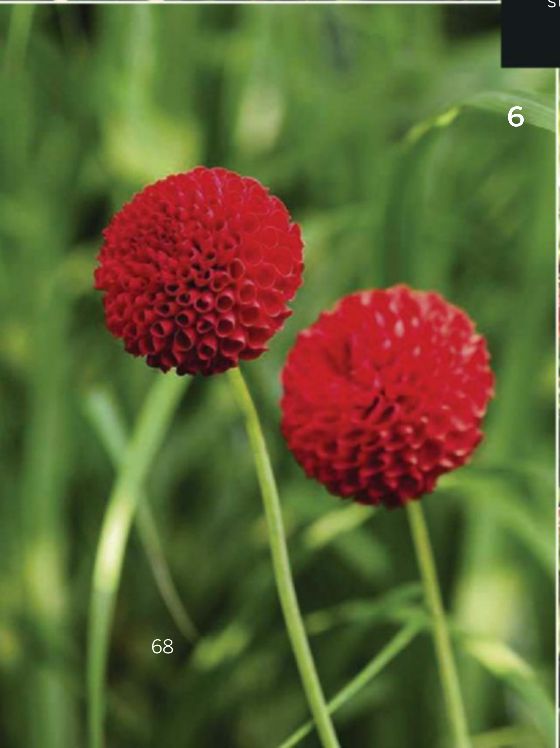
4 *Hemerocallis* 'Janice Brown'
Award-winning American daylily with shell-pink petals staining to a darker shade at the throat. Hardy and bulletproof. 60cm. RHS H7.

5 *Lilium leichtlinii*
Vibrant Japanese lily with strongly recurved golden petals speckled with brown. 1.2m. RHS H7.

6 *Dahlia* 'Pom of Poms'
This plant has the smallest pompoms Albrecht has ever seen on a dahlia (3cm across). Vibrant red flowers on strong stems. 1.2m. RHS H3.

7 *Helenium* 'Waltraut'
Rusty centres fading to warm orange on strong stems. Hardy, with an extremely long-flowering season and good seedheads. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7.

8 *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer'
Deservedly popular flowers of iridescent red are held on branched stems above sword-like, pleated leaves from August to September. 1m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.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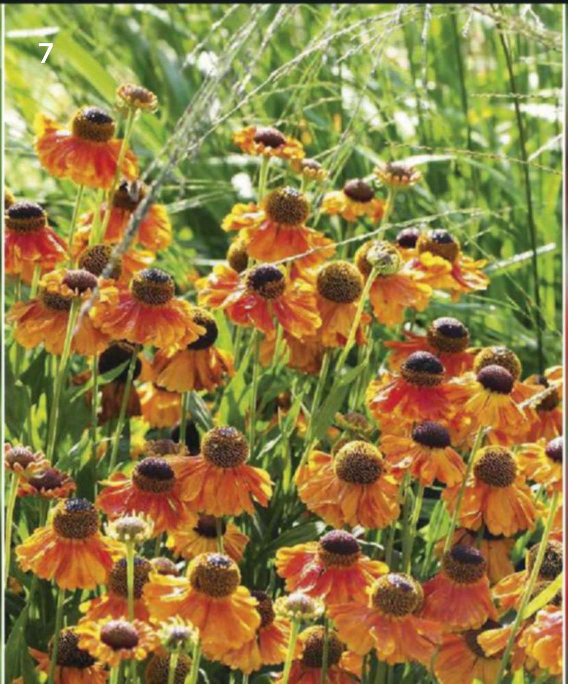
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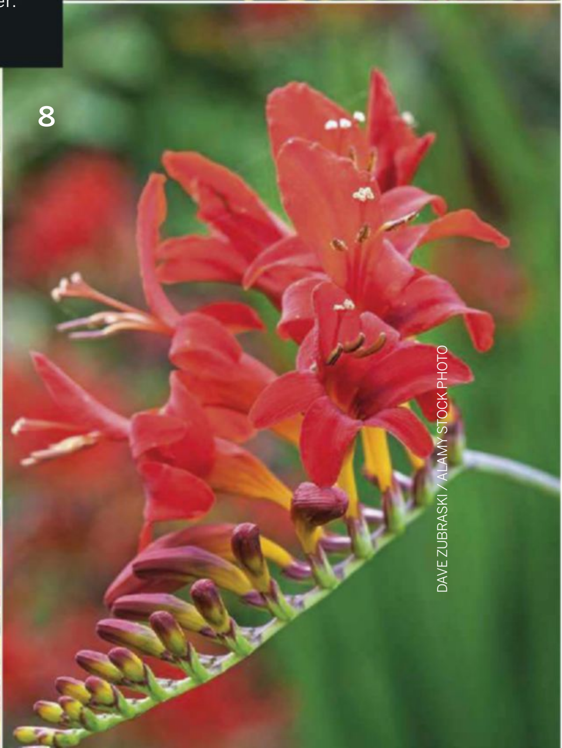
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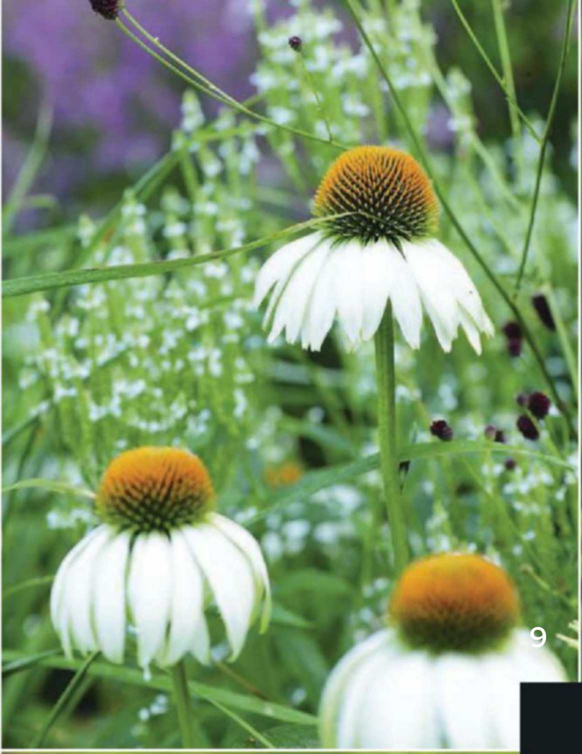
DAVE ZUBRASKI / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO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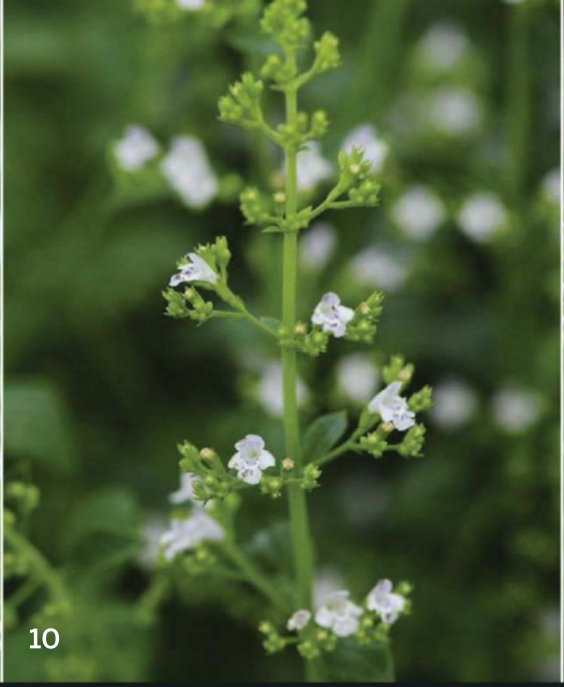
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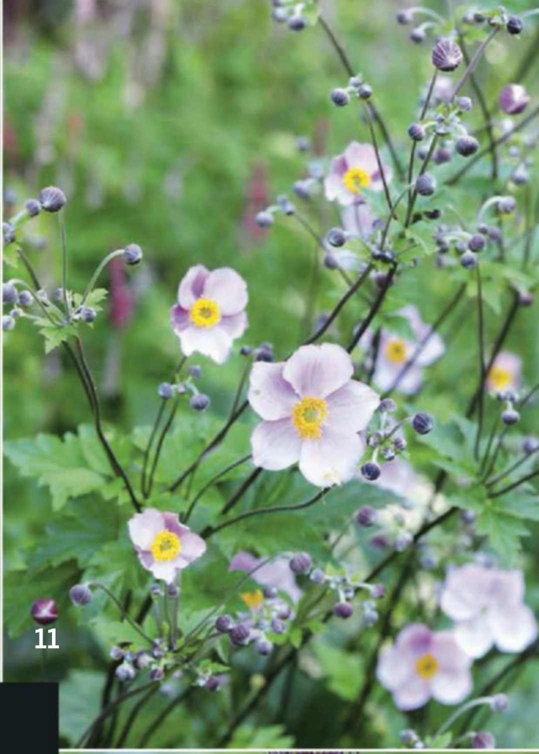
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COOL COLOURS

9 *Echinacea purpurea* (white seedling)
White form of the popular North American purple coneflower. Longer lived than many of the modern hybrids and will self-sow generously. 90cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

10 *Calamintha nepeta*
Spikes of tiny, pale-lilac, tubular flowers float above neat mounds of extremely fragrant foliage. 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 5a-7b.

11 *Anemone tomentosa* 'Robustissima'
Shell-pink flowers dance on reddish wiry stems in late summer. Strong, hardy perennial with good dark-green leaves. 1.2m. RHS H7.

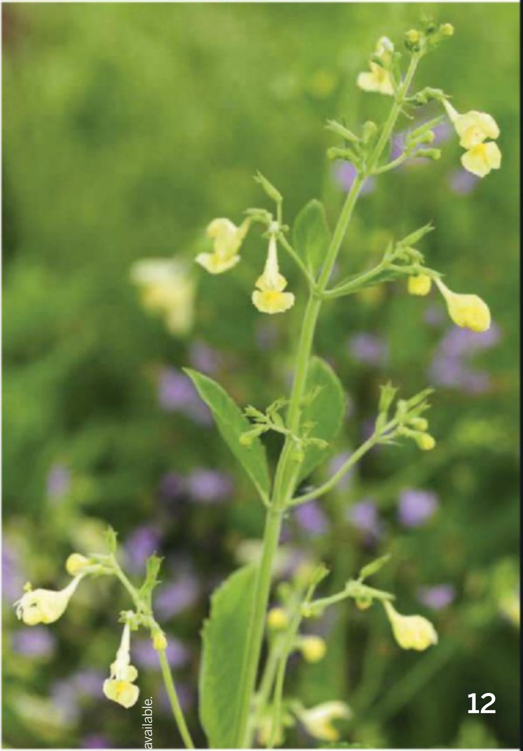
12 *Nepeta govaniana*
Unusually coloured catmint with graceful yellow flowers. Pale and refreshing in late summer. 90cm. RHS H6.

13 *Lobelia* x *speciosa* 'Hadspen Purple'
Strong purple form of this campanula relative.Should not be left to dry out too much. 70cm. RHS H5.

14 *Angelica gigas*
Statuesque umbellifer from East Asia. Wine-red domes are held on dark stems above a body of mid-green leaves. A hardy biennial that will self-sow readily. 1.5m. RHS H6.

15 *Echinacea purpurea* 'Virgin'
Sturdy, well-branched cultivar with white rays emanating from a strong green boss. 60cm. RHS H5, USDA 3a-8b.

16 *Thalictrum* Splendide White (= 'Fr21034')
This hybrid is the taller and more vigorous cousin of *T. delavayi* 'Album'. Wonderful transparent clouds of white drift above aquilegia-like foliage. 1.7m. AGM. RHS H7.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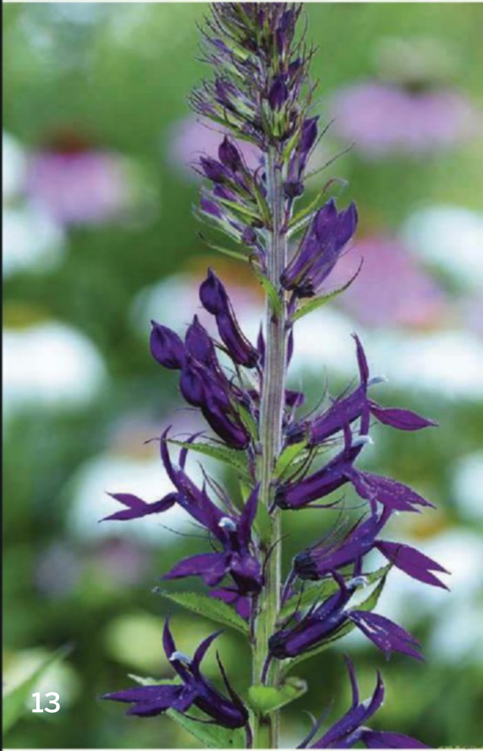
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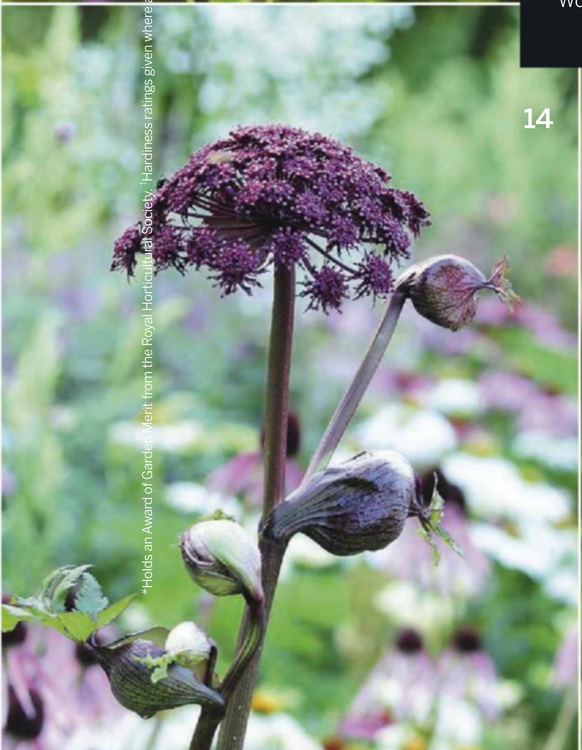
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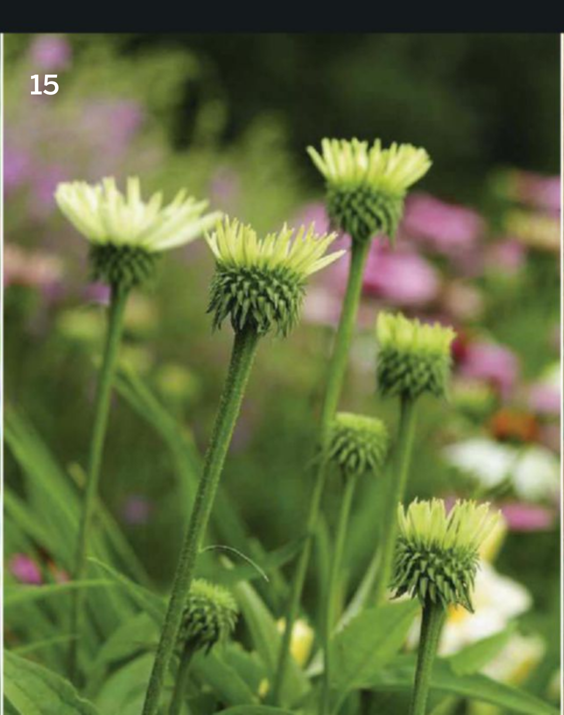
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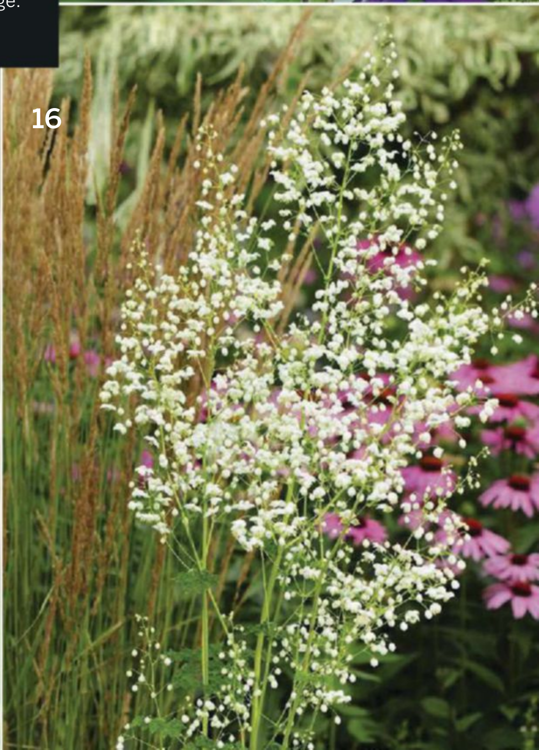
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*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.

▷ delphiniums. The next area, the Summer Garden, comes as something of a shock, with the brash yellow of *Rudbeckia fulgida* var. *sullivantii* 'Goldsturm' with the red of *Crocosmia* 'Lucifer'.

The tension created between the cool tranquillity near the house and the heat of the Summer Garden dissipates as the path winds through a shady transitional zone of ferns, rodgersias and other foliage plants. At the end of the path a small bridge arches under a magnificent oak to the largest room, the Meadow Garden. Here deep beds punctuated with columnar topiaries and brimming with late-season colour sweep around a generous lawn. Bold groups of perennials, such as asters, heleniums, rudbeckias and echinaceas, are key to the borders, while grasses and the wands of sanguisorba, angelica and *Digitalis ferruginea* soften the scene and provide spikes of vertical interest. Inspired by the creative weeding of Dutch artist-gardener Ton ter Linden, these borders are the considered result of editing many self-sowers. "At first we really struggled with the weeds," says Ute, although the pair have now developed a system. In early spring, Ute carefully marks groups of self-sowers, such as such as *Echinacea purpurea*, with small canes at seedling stage so that Albrecht can avoid them when applying a heavy mulch of sterilised compost.

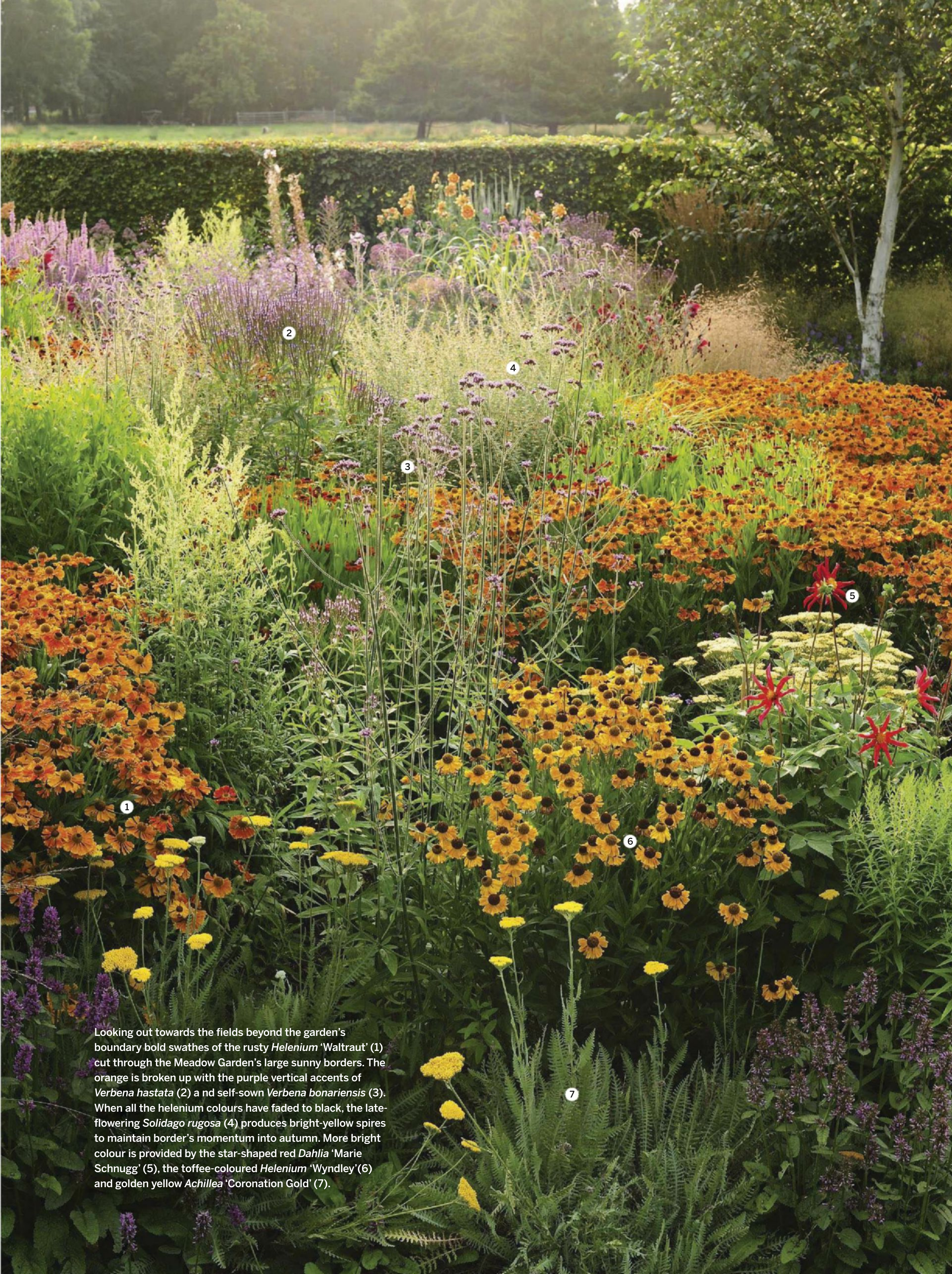
The view to the house from this last section is hidden, so that your gaze is drawn out to the wider landscape, at one point through a cleverly positioned frame in the hedge – as Albrecht explains: "A window makes people look more carefully." The garden is immaculately maintained and in some gardens the result might be sterile, but the Ziburskis know the importance of, as Albrecht puts it, "allowing a few shabby corners". □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Huntorf 1, 26931 Elsfleth, Germany. **Tel** +49 4485 462904. **Web** garten-moorriem.de
Open 18 May – 30 September, Friday-Saturday (2-6pm), Sunday (10am-6pm), admission €4.

> THE MEADOW GARDEN BORDERS ARE THE CONSIDERED RESULT OF EDITING SELF-SOWERS

A graceful *Cornus controversa* 'Variegata' holds court among sentinel yews. Beneath these strong structural elements lies a naturalistic planting of perennials dominated by a sea of self-sown *Echinacea purpurea*.

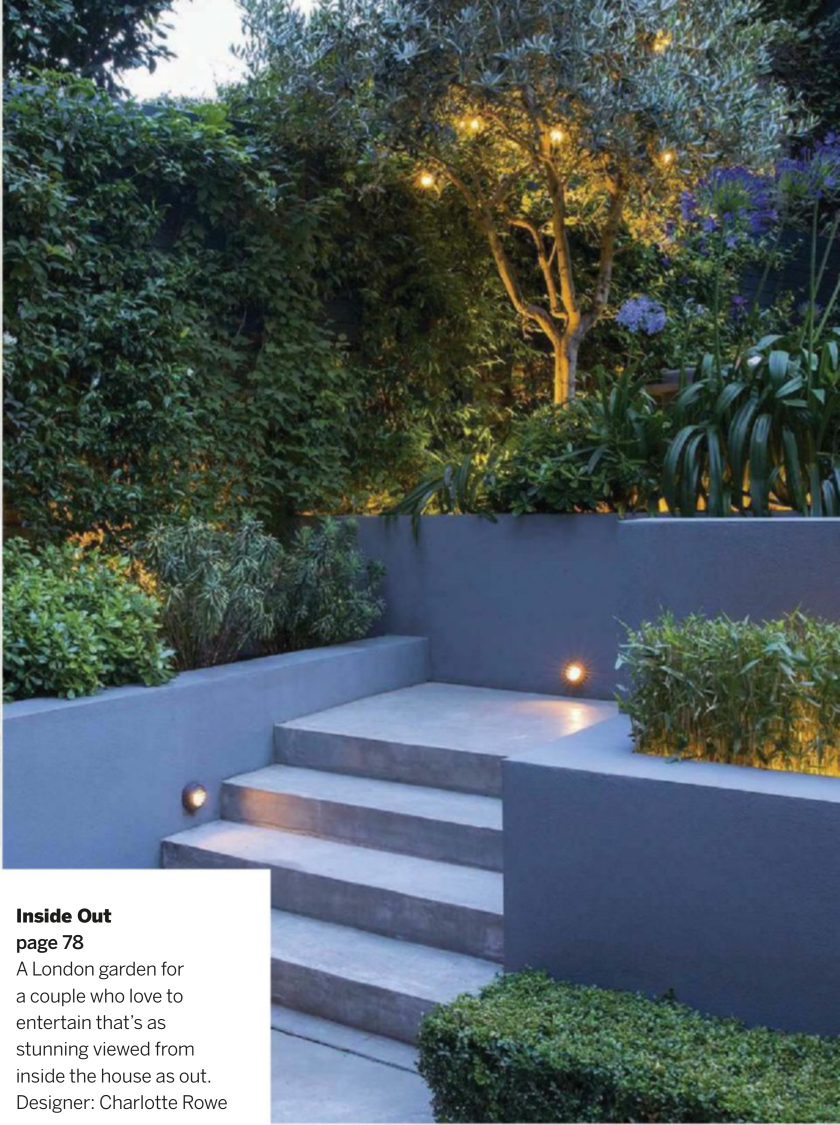


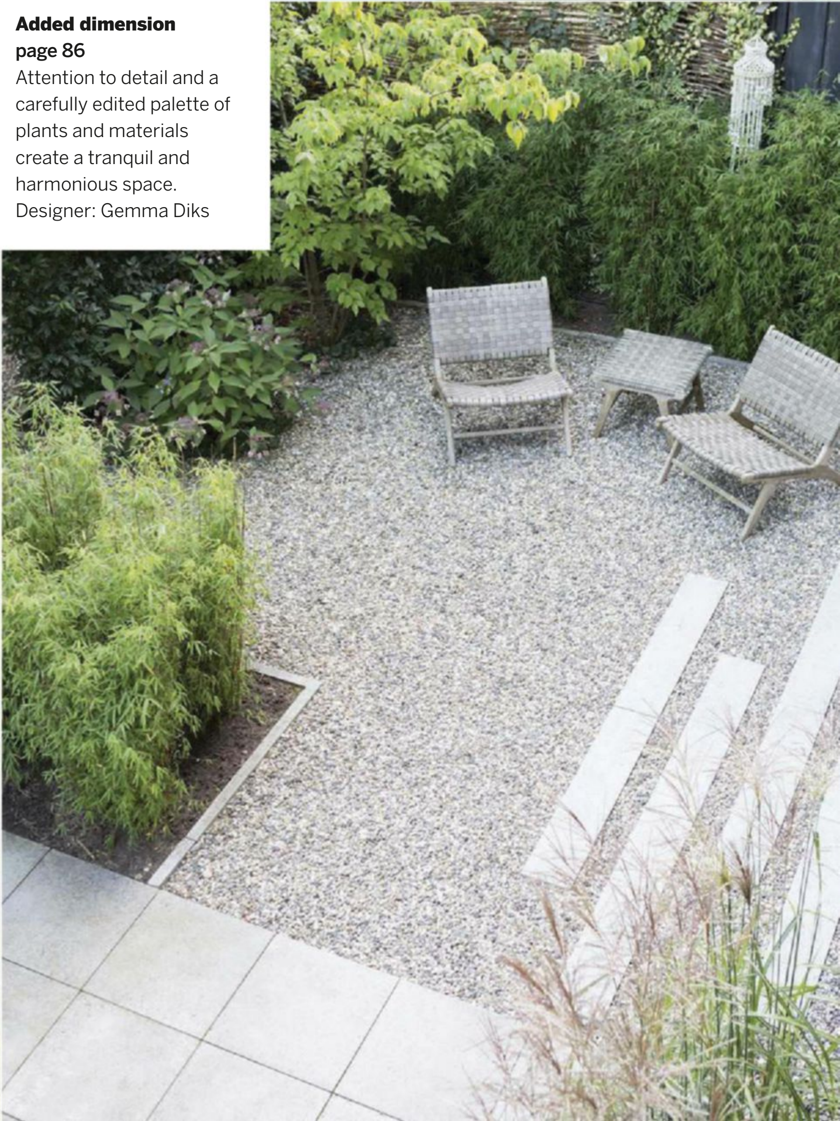
Looking out towards the fields beyond the garden's boundary bold swathes of the rusty *Helenium* 'Waltraut' (1) cut through the Meadow Garden's large sunny borders. The orange is broken up with the purple vertical accents of *Verbena hastata* (2) and self-sown *Verbena bonariensis* (3). When all the helenium colours have faded to black, the late-flowering *Solidago rugosa* (4) produces bright-yellow spires to maintain border's momentum into autumn. More bright colour is provided by the star-shaped red *Dahlia* 'Marie Schnugg' (5), the toffee-coloured *Helenium* 'Wyndley'(6) and golden yellow *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold' (7).

SMALL GARDENS

From a small courtyard planted with conifers to a suburban garden with Zen-like calm; a city space designed with entertaining in mind to a plantsman's private paradise – four gardens full of design inspiration for the most compact plots

MARIANNE MAJERUS; MODESTE HERWIG / GAP PHOTOS



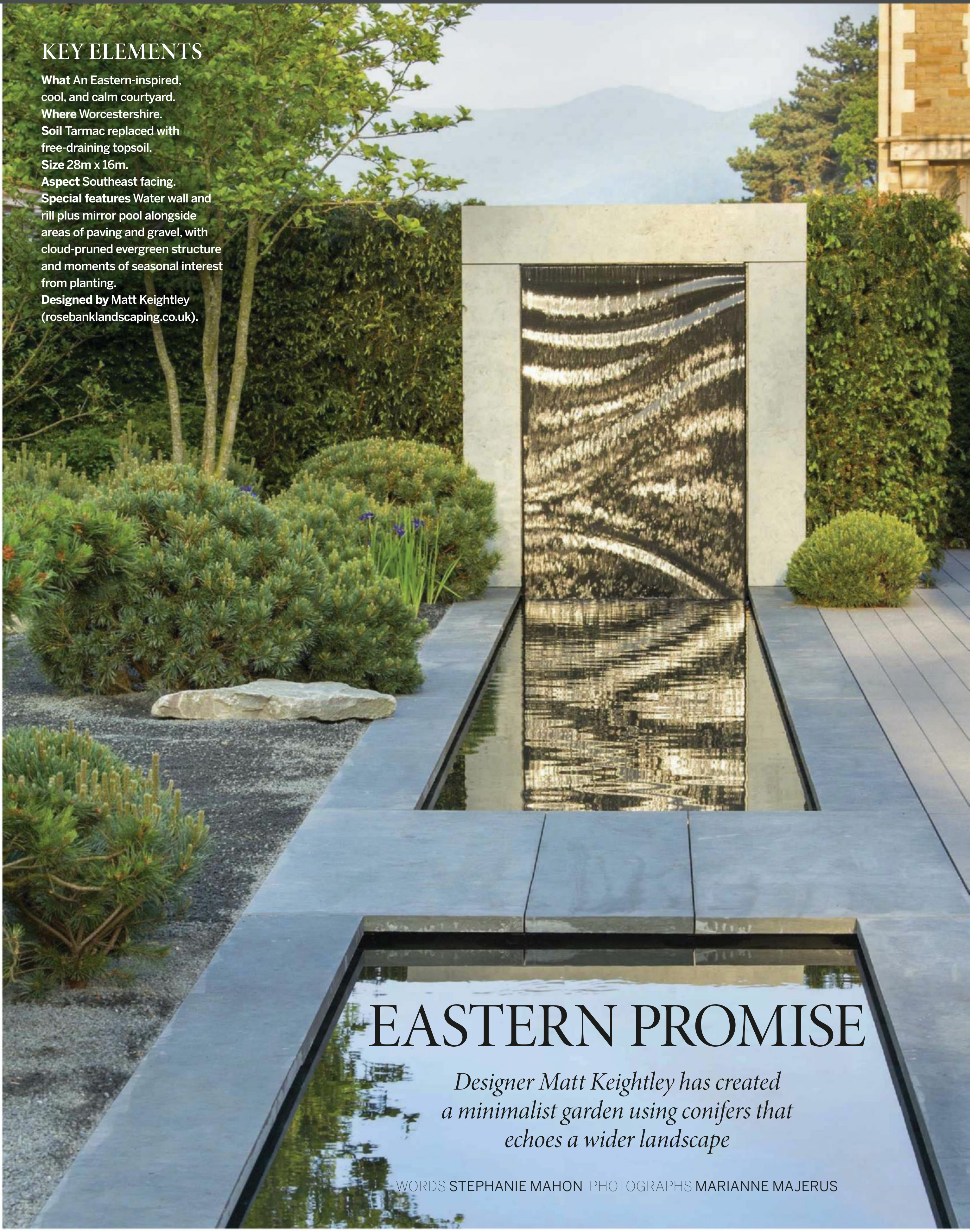


Eastern promise
page 74
A minimalist, contemporary garden with an Asian influence that uses conifers to echo the wider landscape.
Designer: Matt Keightley

Inside Out
page 78
A London garden for a couple who love to entertain that's as stunning viewed from inside the house as out.
Designer: Charlotte Rowe

Private view
page 82
A multi-layered, small town garden with the type of serious planting more typically associated with a larger garden.
Designer: Sean Walter

Added dimension
page 86
Attention to detail and a carefully edited palette of plants and materials create a tranquil and harmonious space.
Designer: Gemma Diks



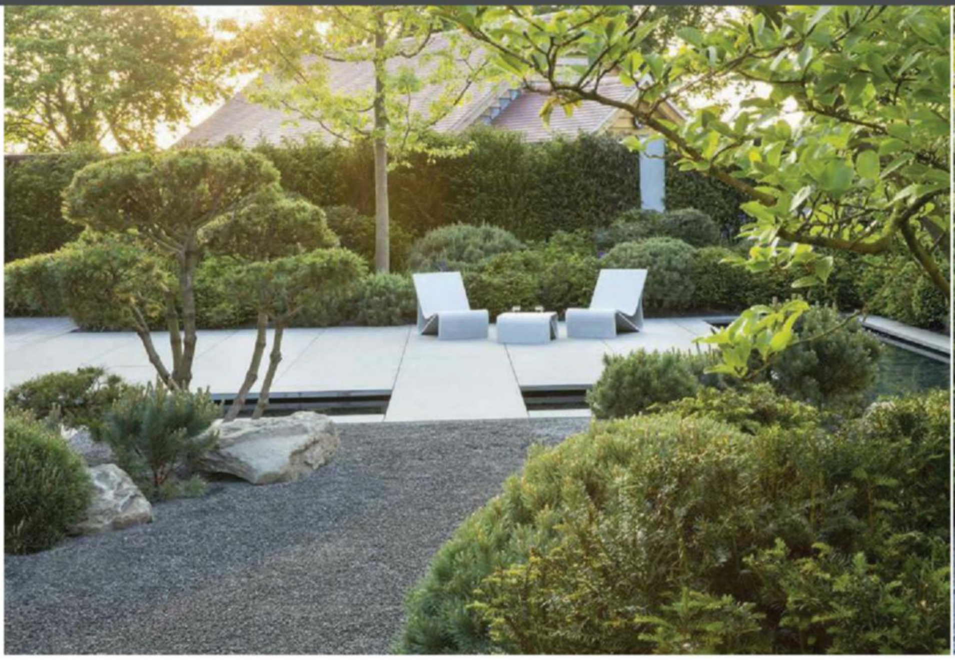
EASTERN PROMISE

Designer Matt Keightley has created a minimalist garden using conifers that echoes a wider landscape

WORDS STEPHANIE MAHON PHOTOGRAPHS MARIANNE MAJERUS

KEY ELEMENTS

What An Eastern-inspired, cool, and calm courtyard.
Where Worcestershire.
Soil Tarmac replaced with free-draining topsoil.
Size 28m x 16m.
Aspect Southeast facing.
Special features Water wall and rill plus mirror pool alongside areas of paving and gravel, with cloud-pruned evergreen structure and moments of seasonal interest from planting.
Designed by Matt Keightley (rosebanklandscaping.co.uk).



It takes quite a bit of effort to make something look effortless, and designer Matt Keightley had to consider every little detail when he set about creating this serene and elegant courtyard garden. A contemporary, minimalist space, it was designed as a small garden for a new cottage, part of the owners' 45-acre estate with views of the iconic Malvern Hills.

The couple, who met Matt at the 2014 RHS Chelsea Flower Show, explained that they wanted a quintessentially English cottage garden, "but they kept referencing modern living, low maintenance, and a love of entertaining their friends," says Matt, "so something didn't add up. I did a couple of concepts: something that resembled a cottage garden; and something quite out there, an Eastern-inspired space. They immediately went for that one." It was a risky move, considering Asian-style gardens in Britain can end up looking contrived and pastiche, but Matt was quietly confident that childhood holidays spent in Singapore, where his mother grew up, gave him an insight into the essential character and tone of Eastern landscapes.

The starting point for his design was to request a Zen-like level of patience from his clients, by eschewing the English penchant for a floral extravaganza in summer, and instead creating several peaks of interest through the year. The first show comes in spring from the blossom of *Magnolia stellata* and *M.* x *loebneri* 'Merrill', followed by ▷

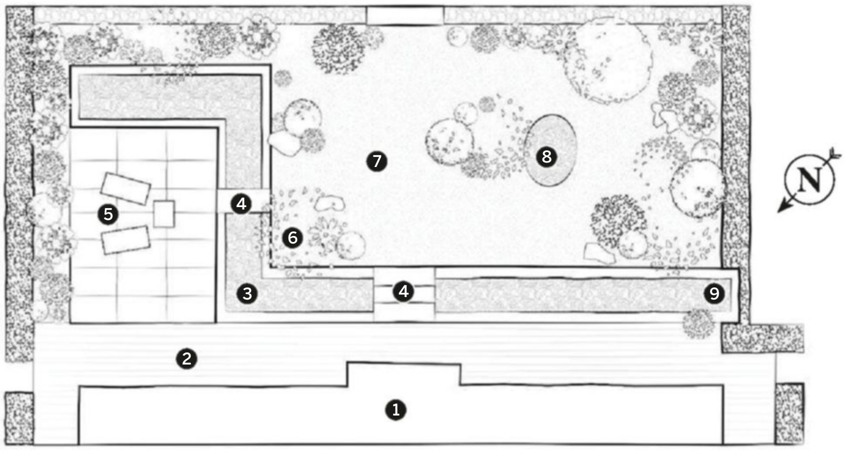
Facing page
The granite water wall was designed to echo the shapes of the Malvern Hills in the distance, bringing the wider countryside into the garden.

This page from above left
The garden contains several magnolia trees and pin oaks (*Quercus palustris*), which create beautiful effects on the pale paving and dark gravel when their blossom and foliage fall.

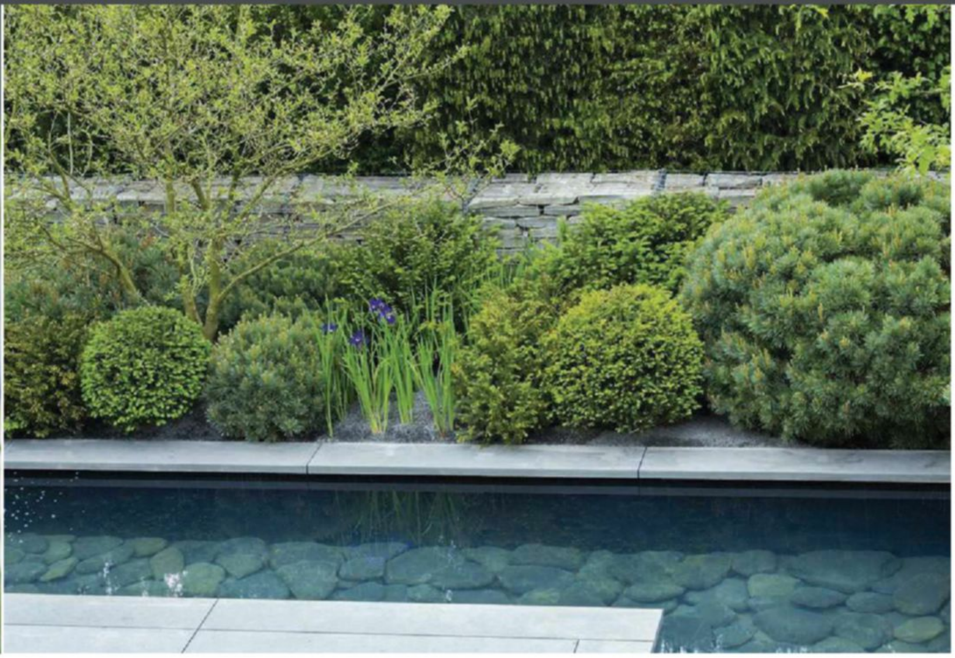
The mirror pool contains a black pond dye to help it reflect the surrounding garden and canopy as well as a neighbouring walnut tree.

GARDEN PLAN

❶ House
❷ Composite deck boardwalk
❸ Water rill
❹ Stone bridges
❺ Stone terrace
❻ Cloud-pruned *Pinus sylvestris*
❼ Gravel area
❽ Mirror pool
❾ Granite water wall



PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY



Facing page
The rill turns a corner and leads the eye across the terrace, which has large stone pavers with ungrouted joints, giving a clean, crisp finish. Bonsai-form specimens of *Pinus sylvestris* 'Watereri' offer a different texture to the structural cloud hedging beyond.

This page, from above left
***Iris sibirica* 'Pansy Purple' flowers** throughout the garden in open pockets left in the evergreen cloud-pruned hedge, and lights up the garden in late spring.

The base of the rill features layers of river-washed boulder pebbles that add depth to the feature. The rill is edged with clipped *Taxus baccata* and *Pinus mugo*.

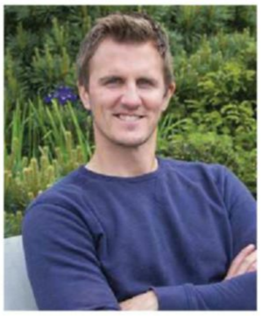
▷ a drift of irises in summer, with a finale of colourful leaf fall in autumn from pin oaks. These moments of beauty are supported by year-round evergreen structure from cloud-pruned yew and *Pinus mugo*, and *Pinus sylvestris* 'Watereri' clipped into bonsai forms.

The seasonal highlights can be viewed from the 3m-wide composite decking boardwalk that runs, like the garden, along the width of the property, allowing the owners to consider the space before entering it. Arranged on one level, the garden might at first seem at odds with the surrounding countryside. Matt countered this by echoing the shapes of the rolling hills beyond in the face pattern of the granite water wall. The water spills down into a crystal-clear rill, complete with koi, and progresses across the space to where it turns a corner, compelling you to follow. "This was a way of stretching the garden, making it feel larger than it actually is," Matt explains,"but it also provides that drama and intrigue a garden needs, to get you to move through it."

Across the rill, an area of dark gravel features several characterful boulders and has as its centrepiece a small pool that reflects the sky and trees. This contrasts with the sleek, pale-grey terrace, with its uber-stylish metal loungers and bespoke paving – huge, clean-cut pieces of stone that have been laid with no grout, creating crisp shadow lines.

Matt describes making the garden as really exciting, because it was a unique opportunity to do something so restrained. "It's almost like doing a show garden, where every element has to be just so, and the soft and hard landscaping have to marry perfectly," he says. "I think here we got the balance just right." ◻

MATT'S TIPS TO HELP CREATE A SENSE OF CALM



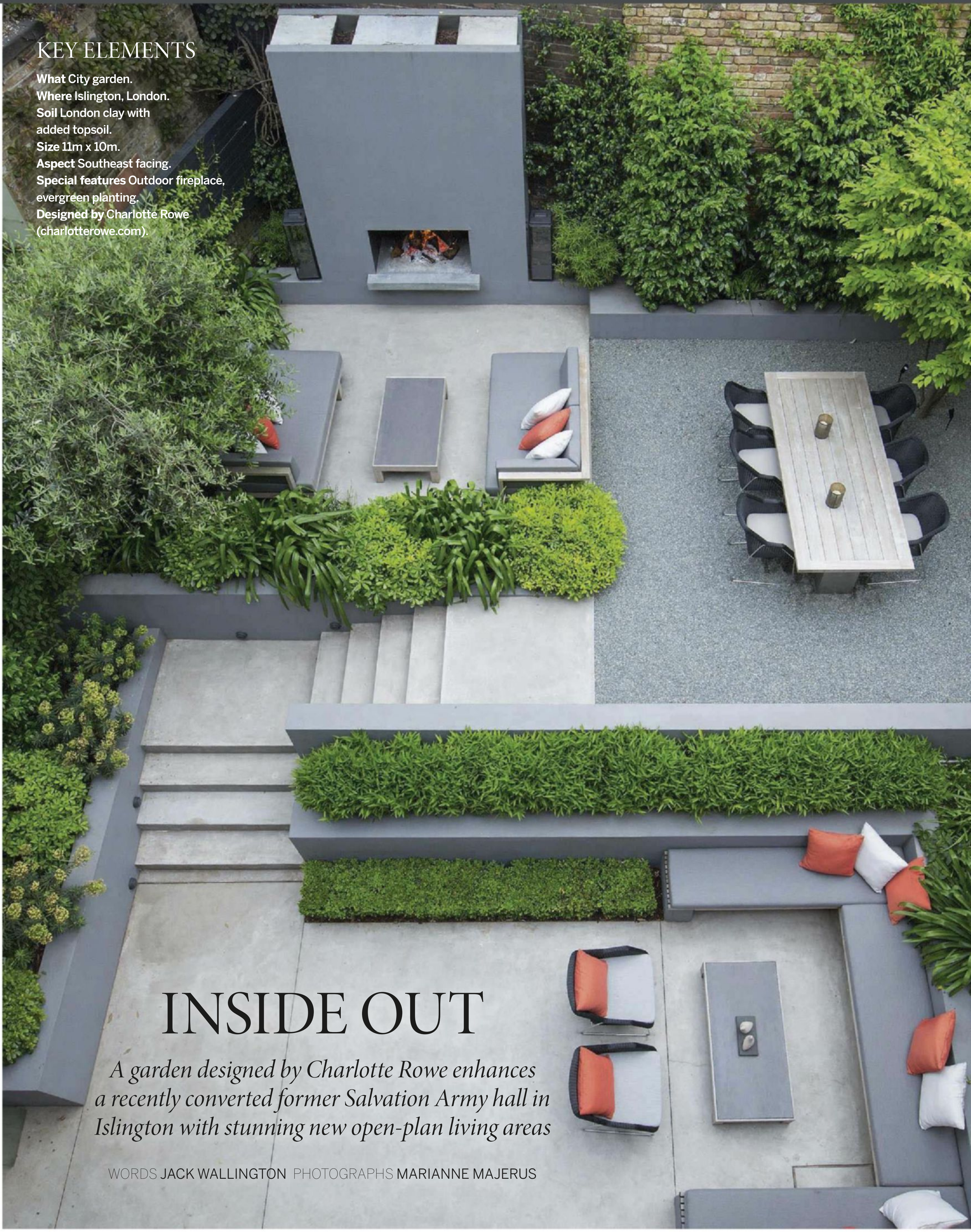
Creating a relaxing garden is about distracting people from their everyday worries. Always play on the senses – add aromas with herbs or aromatic plants. Visually, think not just about colourful flowers but textures of green, such as the glaucous hues and rugged shapes of the pines.

Water is what makes the garden meaningful. I went for gentle turbulence at the bottom of the water wall, so the subtle sound draws you in. Water is also meditative. You can be mesmerised by the reflections in the mirror pond, or enjoy the shadows created by the fish at the bottom of the rill.

Pick the right hard landscaping. Supersized paving minimises the number of joint lines and material intersections in the garden, making an effortless expanse of one crisp material. The gravel has the same effect.

On the terrace, I persuaded the owners to put only two lounge chairs – that's all you need. People often have a terrace that only just fits their dining table, but giving space to a few pieces makes a garden more welcoming.

THE RIGHT-ANGLED RILL WAS A WAY OF STRETCHING THE GARDEN AS WELL AS PROVIDING DRAMA AND INTRIGUE



KEY ELEMENTS

What City garden.
Where Islington, London.
Soil London clay with added topsoil.
Size 11m x 10m.
Aspect Southeast facing.
Special features Outdoor fireplace, evergreen planting.
Designed by Charlotte Rowe (charlotterowe.com).

INSIDE OUT

A garden designed by Charlotte Rowe enhances a recently converted former Salvation Army hall in Islington with stunning new open-plan living areas

WORDS JACK WALLINGTON PHOTOGRAPHS MARIANNE MAJERUS

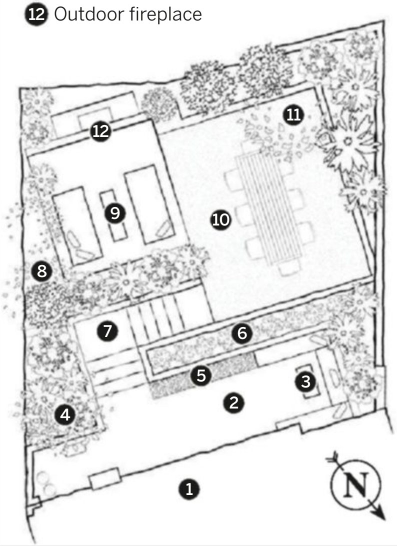
Facing page
A cool grey palette links the different areas of this north London garden. Asymmetrical steps create plenty of space on the lower level for a seating area near the kitchen and are partly concealed by a neat hedge of *Pleioblastus pygmaeus* 'Distichus' above *Buxus sempervirens*.

Below, from left
A stylish, contemporary fireplace forms a focal point for the upper seating area given privacy by plantings of *Pittosporum tobira* 'Nanum' and *Agapanthus* 'Black Pantha' and an existing olive tree moved to this new location.

Using the same soft furnishings and planting ensures continuity between the evening sitting area and this sunny morning terrace on the lower level.

GARDEN PLAN

1. House
2. Lower level terrace
3. Built-in seating area
4. Holm oak tree
5. *Buxus sempervirens*
6. *Pleioblastus pygmaeus* 'Distichus'
7. Polished concrete steps
8. Olive tree
9. Evening sitting area
10. Gravel dining area
11. *Carpinus betulus*
12. Outdoor fireplace



PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY

When Mark Baxter and Robert Bready decided to extend their Islington home – a former Victorian schoolhouse that had more latterly been used as a Salvation Army hall – by digging down into the basement, their first quandary was how to bring sufficient light into their new open-plan kitchen. Their solution to that dilemma – installing double-height, steel-framed windows that link the kitchen with the sitting room above – brought a new problem. If much of the rear wall of their house was to be replaced by a huge wall of glass, their outdoor space would be on display from most of the house most of the time. Now they would need a garden that would not only provide a view worthy of its stylish frame, but also match the style of their home and offer year-round interest.

Step forward designer Charlotte Rowe, who had already designed two roof terraces for the couple and was sympathetic to their preferred contemporary style. Thanks to her early collaboration with the architects, she was also able to overcome some of the challenges of digging out the basement and turn the new lower level to her advantage. "Fortunately, we were there at the beginning before a spade had gone into the ground," she says.

Charlotte's decision to dig out the bottom area of the garden next to the house means that Mark and Robert can now walk straight from their kitchen into the garden and by creating two tiers Charlotte was able to squeeze three areas for entertaining into a tight ▷

CHARLOTTE'S TIPS FOR OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES

Lighting makes a warm, inviting space in urban gardens, both for al fresco dining on a summer evening, and for enhancing the view from inside during the winter months when there are fewer opportunities for sitting outside.

Repeating a colour scheme inside and out creates a unified space that makes a compact house or garden feel much more spacious.

Evergreen plants create year-round structure, but combine them with plants such as clematis for seasonal highlights.

Consider the transition from house to garden, repeating materials and keeping different levels consistent.

Make entertaining areas visible from inside – this draws people out into the garden, while specific features, such as a fireplace, can also be enjoyed from inside.

▷ space without compromising on style. "Mark and Robert wanted a breakfast area in the morning sun, a dining space, another seating area and a fireplace," she explains.

The fireplace now forms a focal point for the enclosed sitting area on the upper (original) level of the garden, and it has been positioned so it aligns centrally when viewed from the house. Complementary shades of grey help differentiate the separate areas while linking the garden as a whole to the house with a polished, grey concrete floor. The grey palette also helps to emphasise the planting, including various clematis, *Agapanthus* 'Black Pantha' and *Euphorbia characias* 'Humpty Dumpty', which helps to soften the sharp lines of the landscaping. In particular, a row of dwarf bamboo, *Pleioblastus pygmaeus* 'Distichus', breaks the height of the top tier, making it feel less imposing.

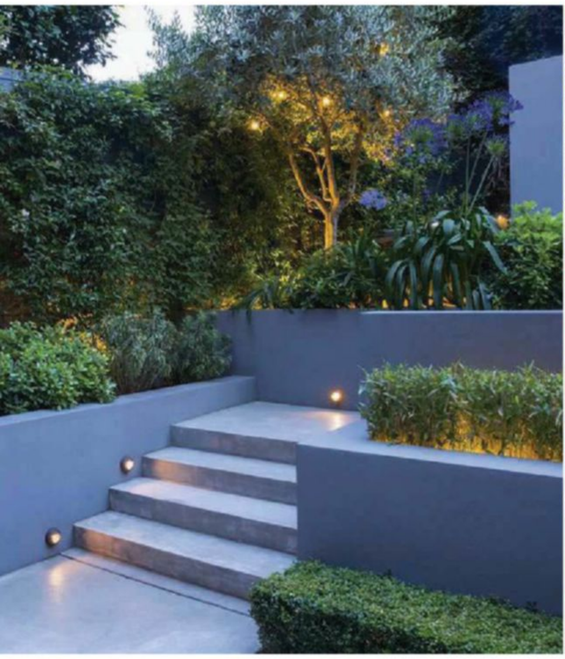
As the garden is overlooked by neighbouring houses, a desire for privacy was also high on the couple's wish list. "Mark and Robert wanted a really mature tree to create privacy, so we used a crane to lift a holm oak over the top of the property into the garden, closing the road," says Charlotte. Climbers, such as *Trachelospermum jasminoides*, *Hydrangea seemanii* and *Akebia quinata* 'Shirobana', help prevent the high walls from feeling oppressive and combine with other soft planting to give this urban courtyard the feel of a woodland clearing. "You can sit here with a book and feel totally secluded," says Robert.

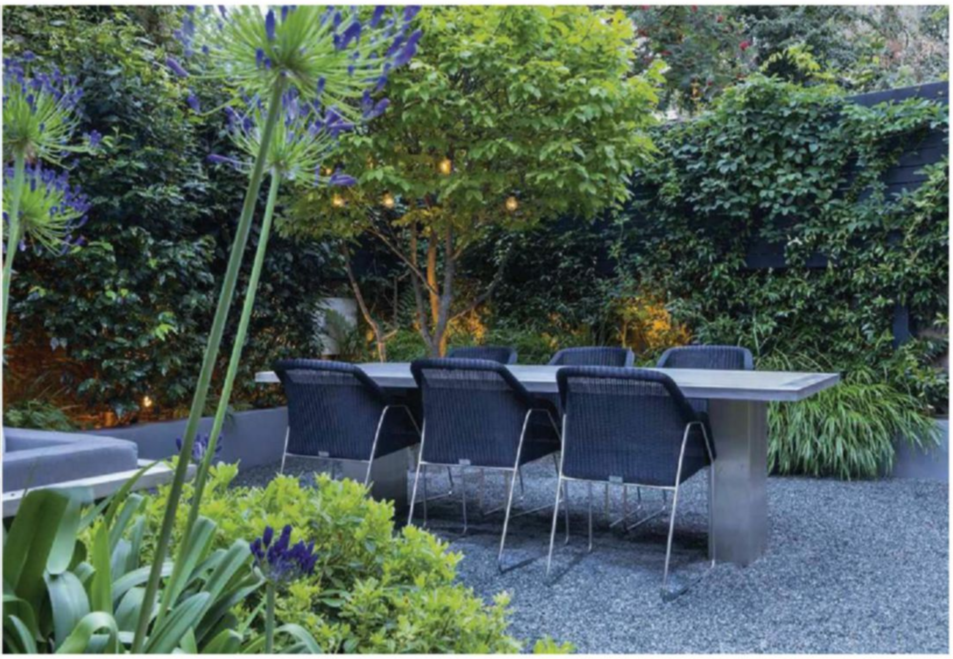
This is a garden where technical knowledge and design meet, but for Charlotte, it is atmosphere that is the most important thing."The green planting against the different shades of grey, and the privacy and peace, are lovely," she says. ◻

Facing page
Double-height Crittall steel-framed windows allow light to flood into the new extended kitchen and make the garden feel part of the house. Polished concrete floors extend out from the kitchen to create a unified space.

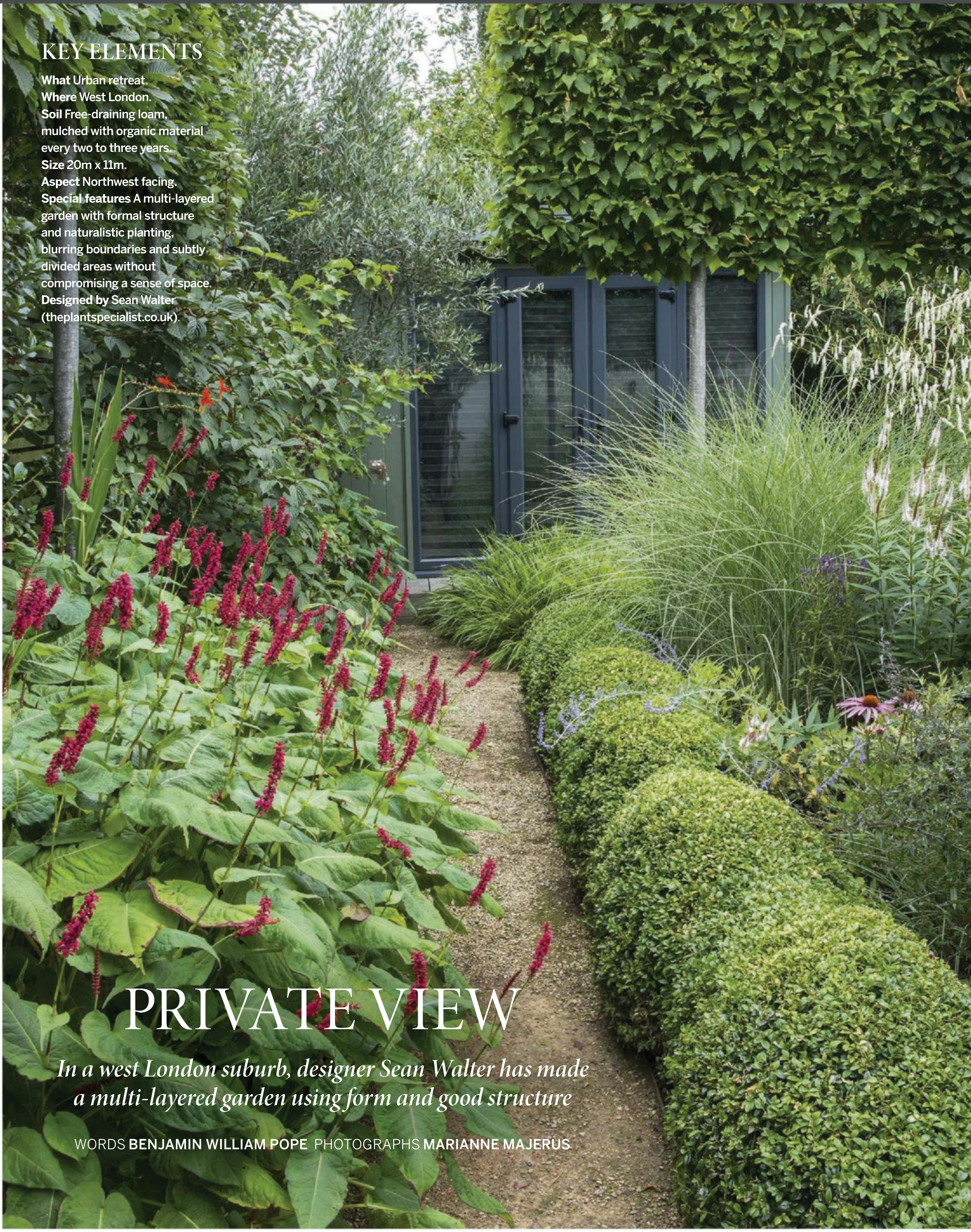
This page, from below left
A range of different lighting, including vintage festoon lights in trees, lanterns and uplighting among planting, turns the garden into an inviting space for summer entertaining. Spotlighting on the steps also helps avoid trips and spills.

The gravel for the dining area is a darker but complementary grey to the shade used to render the walls helping to both define and unify the different areas. Climbers, including *Trachelospermum jasminoides* and *Akebia quinata* 'Shirobana', combine with lush planting and a multi-stemmed *Carpinus betulus* to create a woodland feel in this corner.





CLIMBERS COMBINE WITH SOFT PLANTING TO GIVE THE FEEL OF A WOODLAND CLEARING



KEY ELEMENTS

What Urban retreat.
Where West London.
Soil Free-draining loam, mulched with organic material every two to three years.
Size 20m x 11m.
Aspect Northwest facing.
Special features A multi-layered garden with formal structure and naturalistic planting, blurring boundaries and subtly divided areas without compromising a sense of space.
Designed by Sean Walter (theplantspecialist.co.uk).

PRIVATE VIEW

In a west London suburb, designer Sean Walter has made a multi-layered garden using form and good structure

WORDS **BENJAMIN WILLIAM POPE** PHOTOGRAPHS **MARIANNE MAJERUS**

Stepping through a side gate, I leave the leafy suburb of East Sheen and arrive in a garden that feels peacefully secluded yet deceptively large. What stands out are the geometric forms and lines that construct the garden, while its boundaries seem virtually non-existent. Pleached hornbeam, yew buttresses and evergreen shrubs slot neatly alongside steel-edged paths, Indian sandstone and a metal pergola. It may sound austere, but the strong lines are either broken or obscured by the soft abundant planting of herbaceous perennials, ornamental grasses and climbers. The result is a balance of formal structure and natural finesse, layer upon layer that reveals itself the longer you look.

Designed and planted eight years ago by Sean Walter of The Plant Specialist, the garden measures just 220 square metres. Despite this there is a large terrace with spacious views over a generous lawn. To the side is the main perennial border, which occupies over a quarter of the total garden. What might appear to be a brave design choice is actually a rather clever one. Having such a deep border allows layering of the planting while increasing variety and seasonal interest, a luxury usually associated with larger gardens.

The border is framed on two sides by stately pleached hornbeam. Four metres tall and immaculately clipped, they offer seclusion to parts of the garden, while framing desired views and obscuring others. “Gardens feel bigger when you can’t see them all at once,” explains Sean. They also add height, defining and claiming additional space from the

▷

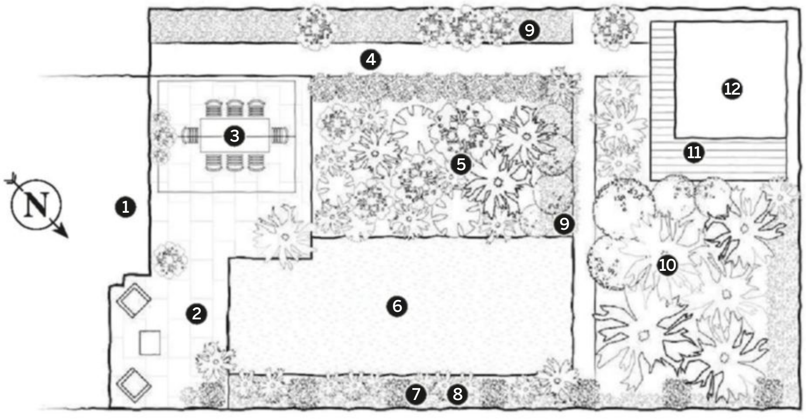
Facing page
In summer *Persicaria amplexicaulis* ‘JS Caliente’ provides some vibrant heat in a narrow shady border, alongside the main path towards the garden studio. Echoing the path, an organically clipped box hedge adds contrast and structure, while helping to contain the planting within the main border.

This page, from above left
Naturalistic planting provides a calming backdrop to the lawn and dining area, while softly dividing the garden with layers of *Perovskia* ‘Blue Spire’, *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* var. *alba*, *Miscanthus sinensis* ‘Morning Light’ and *Stipa gigantea*.

Muted tones of green, grey and putty encourage the hard landscaping and garden furniture to take a back seat, allowing the verdant greens and yellows of plants such as *Hosta* ‘Regal Splendor’ and *Hakonechloa macra* to steel the limelight.

GARDEN PLAN

① House
② Seating area
③ Dining area
④ Path
⑤ Main border
⑥ Lawn
⑦ Yew pillars
⑧ *Trachelospermum jasminoides* screen
⑨ Pleached hornbeams
⑩ Grasses and shrubs
⑪ Decking area
⑫ Studio



PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY

Facing page
Enclosed by greenery and flowers, the uncluttered dining area offers glimpses to the garden beyond while providing a comfortable enclosed space to relax in. Dappled light through the *Wisteria* 'roof' above emphasises a sense of shelter.

This page, from above left
The studio at the rear of the garden provides an extra escape. Painted with Sadolin Superdec Sargasso Sea, it nestles discretely among generous clumps of *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Morning Light' and a neighbouring apple tree.

Pleached hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) gives added height and structure to the garden all year round, helping to disguise the boundaries and make the space feel bigger by associating well with the surrounding trees.

▷ sky above. Sean's main aim was to provide the owners with several usable spaces within the garden, corners that would offer privacy and intimacy without compromising the overall sense of space. Beginning with the structural planting and layout, Sean set about creating areas using straight lines and right angles to minimise dead space. The main path, which is kept to the side to allow for other garden features to take centre stage, leads you the to end of the garden, where a studio provides yet another focal point.

Sitting among the robust structure is softer planting, a combination of naturalistic perennials and ornamental grasses, which reminds Sean of his South African roots: "I love the movement these plants have, how they work with the light and offer an informal beauty." Having co-owned a plant nursery for 16 years, along with a design and landscape business, Sean's knowledge and expertise with plants were put to good use. He emphasises that "the garden has to look good without too much maintenance", so he selects plants he knows will perform and behave, those with compatible habits that complement one another and minimise competition. "Ornamental grasses are particularly useful as they offer interest through texture and form during most of the year," he says.

As I prepare to leave the garden, my eyes wander for one last time, resting on a large rounded planter to the side of the dining area. Standing over a metre high, its contents – a generous hummock of *Hakonechloa macra* – echoes the shape below, while softly moving in the breeze. A bold statement that somehow remains delicate. □

SEAN'S TIPS FOR MAXIMISING SMALL SPACES

Plants Be selective and choose plants that are tall and narrow in habit with little basal growth. This will allow you to layer your planting with ease, increasing plant density and variety to extend the season of interest. Examples include echinacea, miscanthus, molinia, panicum, sanguisorba, thalictrum and veronicastrum.

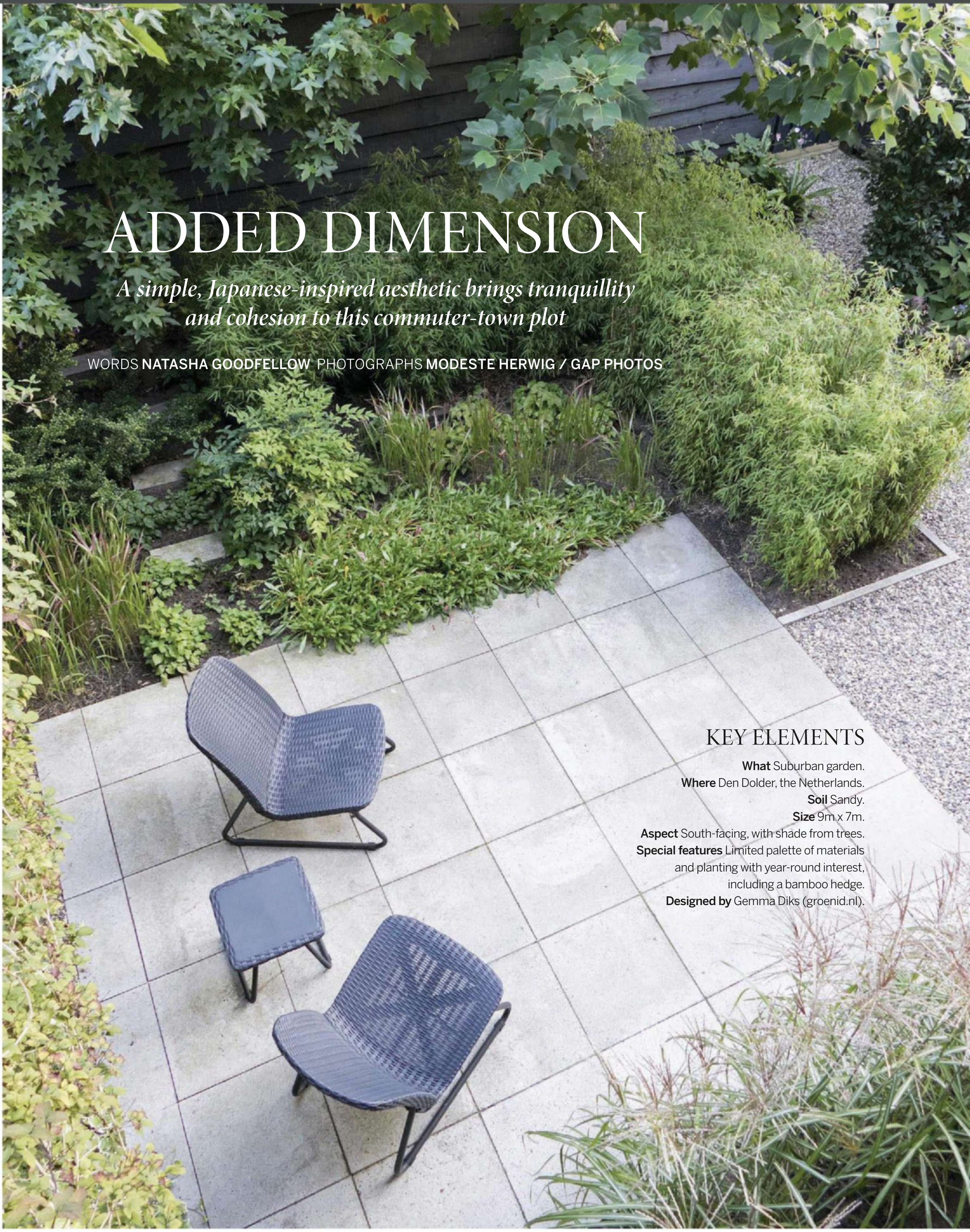
Structure Be bold with formal structure; use it to define areas, frame views and add drama while providing important contrast and anchoring loose perennial planting schemes.

Layout Be generous with space when it comes to key features in the garden. Edit and keep it simple; aim for large focal points as opposed to cluttered corners.

Boundaries Blend garden boundaries using climbing plants, such as *Trachelospermum jasminoides* and *Wisteria sinensis*. Use hedges, pergolas and trellis to frame desirable views of neighbouring features and provide privacy where required.

Practicalities Ease maintenance by clearly defining edges within the garden and planting mixed herbaceous perennials in blocks or dedicated areas. Having a distinct line to work back to will help keep everything in order and tidy.

USABLE CORNERS OFFER PRIVACY AND INTIMACY WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE OVERALL SENSE OF SPACE



ADDED DIMENSION

A simple, Japanese-inspired aesthetic brings tranquillity and cohesion to this commuter-town plot

WORDS **NATASHA GOODFELLOW** PHOTOGRAPHS **MODESTE HERWIG / GAP PHOTOS**

KEY ELEMENTS

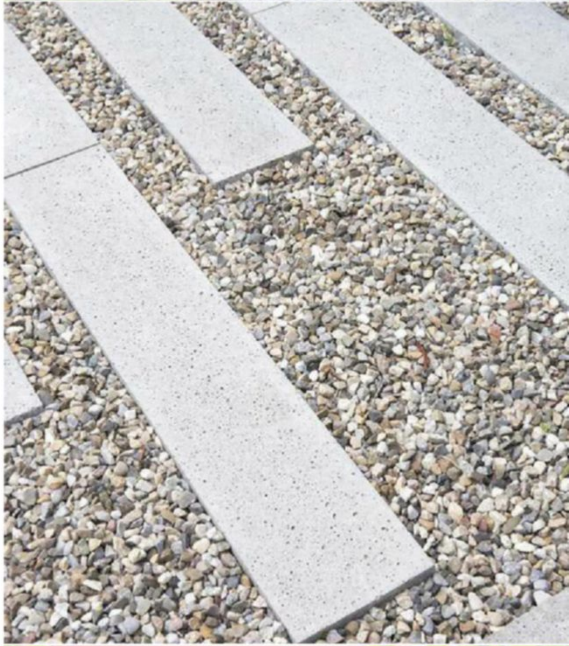
What Suburban garden.
Where Den Dolder, the Netherlands.
Soil Sandy.
Size 9m x 7m.
Aspect South-facing, with shade from trees.
Special features Limited palette of materials and planting with year-round interest, including a bamboo hedge.
Designed by Gemma Diks (groenid.nl).

Facing page
A key feature of the garden is the bamboo hedge. Planted in the middle of the garden, it adds height and interest.

This page from top
This elegant *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis* was moved from a shadier spot by the back fence to a sunnier position where it is planted directly into the gravel.

Gemma used the concrete kerb stones that she used for the borders to make paving slabs, which she fixed into the gravel.

The long, thin concrete pavers create a transition between house and garden. Echoing the concrete of the terrace, they also unify the two parts of the garden.

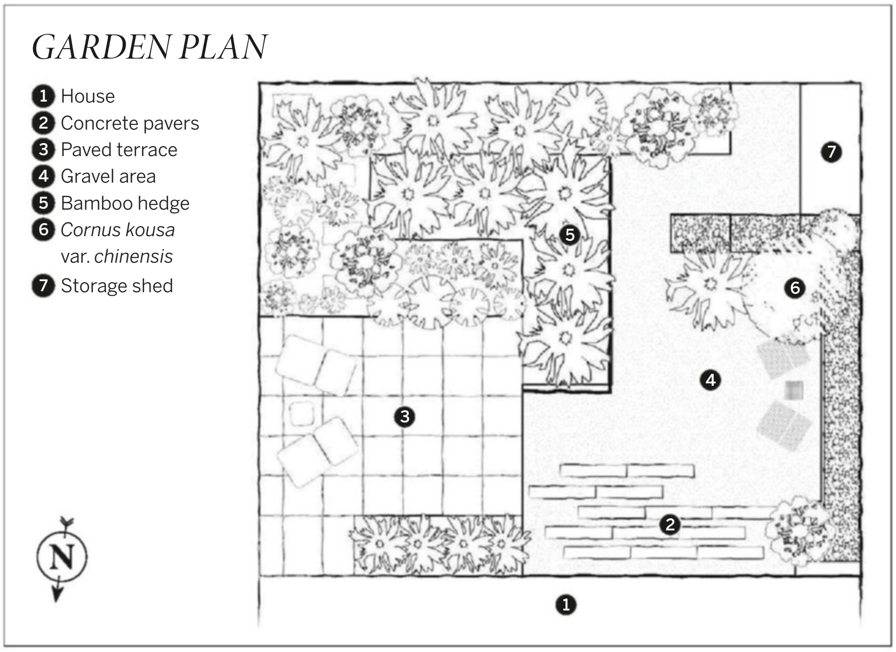


When garden designer Gemma Diks first saw the garden of this new-build terraced house in Den Dolder, a commuter town outside Utrecht in the Netherlands, it was in many ways the archetypal suburban garden: a patch of lawn hemmed in by other buildings, some narrow perimeter beds and a basic strip of paving that the owners, a young family, had tried to enliven with a selection of pots.

"It was such a flat, two-dimensional space," remembers Gemma. "You really only noticed the fencing. The owners had chosen some nice plants, but they were struggling to achieve the sense of unity they wanted."

Gemma's brief was to make the space more appealing and to include two seating areas and a large storage chest. The owners also asked her to keep the plants they had already selected – a liriodendron, a liquidambar, a cornus and a choisya. "The liriodendron is really far too big for the garden, but it did hide an ugly neighbouring wall, and they loved it so much, we had to keep it," says Gemma.

Noting the owners' love of Japanese culture (bamboo and gravel gardens had been mentioned, and the husband practises aikido), Gemma took this as her inspiration. "For me, it was a clear case of less is more," she says. "In order to create the harmony and tranquillity the owners wanted, I knew we had to use a relatively limited palette of materials and plants." She painted the fencing black and persuaded the owners to lose the lawn in favour of two distinct areas – a concrete, paved terrace large enough to ▷



PLAN BY LIAM McAULEY

Facing page
To unify the space materials and plants are kept to a minimum and repeated throughout, from the two bamboo hedges, to the concrete of the terrace, pavers and edging, and the black-painted fence at the back of the garden and adjacent to the house.

This page from top
***Hydrangea aspera* 'The Ditch'** is one of Gemma's favourites, as much for its delicate, airy flowers as its form, which can be appreciated as a multi-stemmed shrub by removing its lower leaves.

Growing up to 2m tall, *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Malepartus' makes quite a statement, especially in a small garden such as this.

The glossy, wavy-edged, evergreen leaves of *Asplenium scolopendrium* make a good contrast with more feathery plants such as bamboo and grasses.

▷ accommodate a dining table, and a more informal gravel area. To marry the two, she also used concrete pavers, albeit of a different shape, in the gravelled area. "They give a more solid transition from the house," explains Gemma. "They also add interest, as well as being easier to walk on."

To tackle the flatness, Gemma planted a bamboo hedge of *Fargesia* Red Panda (='Jiu') in the centre of the garden. "People are used to placing hedges at boundaries," she says, "but I knew this was the thing that would give the garden structure."

The same bamboo is repeated along one side of the garden, abutting a tall hedge of an existing *Prunus lusitanica*, which was also retained. Running at right angles into the garden, it helped create a pathway through the space, as well as providing a neatly hidden spot behind it for the storage chest.

The hedges, teamed with several evergreen plants including *Asarum europaeum*, *Asplenium scolopendrium* and *Ilex crenata* 'Convexa', give the garden colour and structure all year round, and there is also a succession of ever-changing seasonal highlights – far more than you might expect in a garden of this size. In spring, epimediums give way to anemones, followed by the beautiful autumn tones of the liriodendron and the liquidambar. *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Malepartus' flowers from July to September, and in winter has beautiful seedheads, rimed with frost.

In keeping with the owners' wishes, Gemma also spared the *Cornus kousa* var. *chinensis*, although she moved it from the shade of the back fence to a sunnier spot where it is now thriving. "Before it was overlooked; now its form can be appreciated," she says. The same could be said of this simple, yet highly effective, garden. □

GEMMA'S TIPS FOR A LOW-MAINTENANCE GARDEN

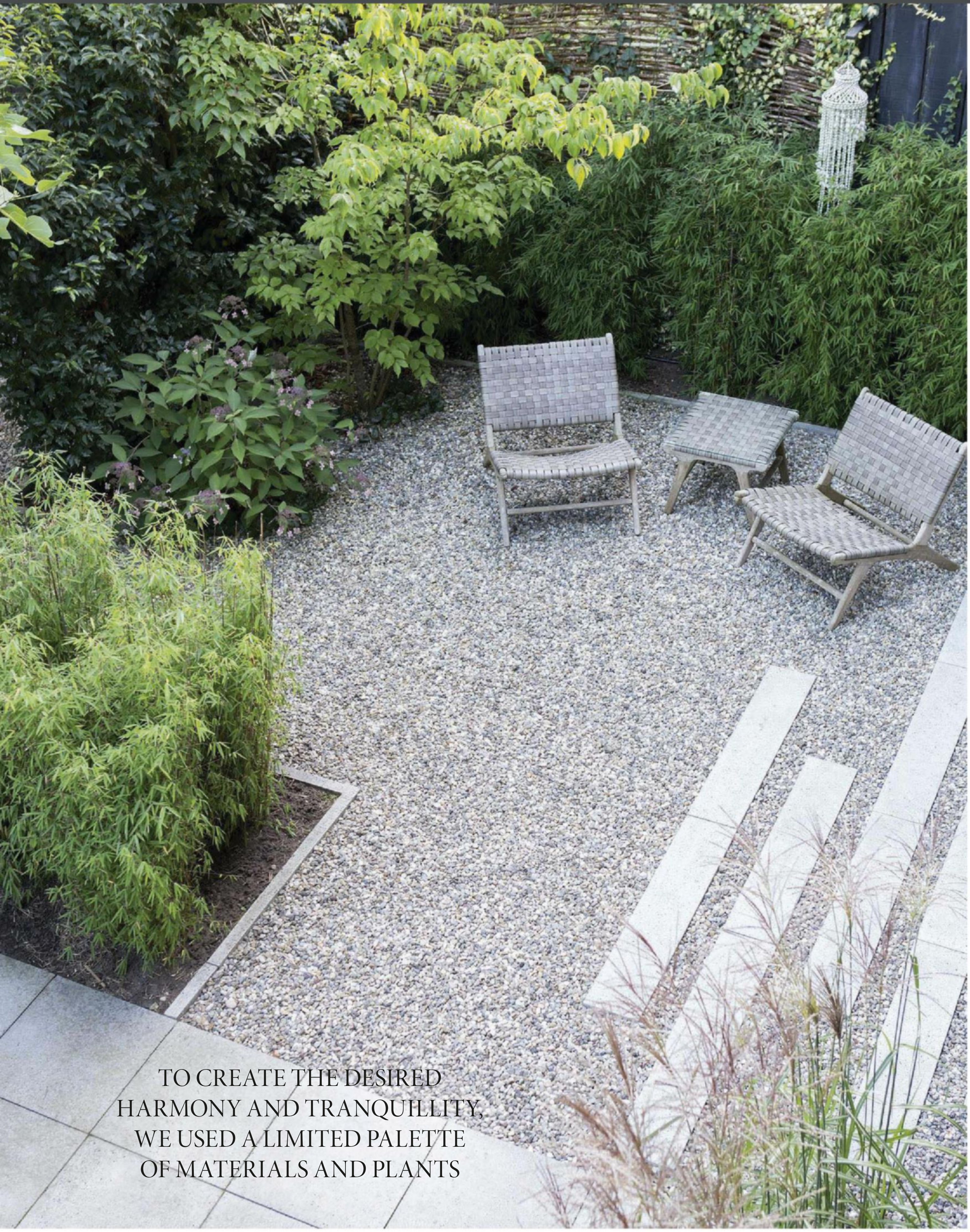
Use groundcover plants, such as the evergreen *Epimedium* x *rubrum* and *Asarum europaeum*. *Hakonechloa macra*, also used here, grows well in shade and colours bronze in autumn. *Acaena microphylla*, a New Zealand native, forms a mat of red flowers in autumn.

Choose easy-to-care-for hard landscaping materials. The gravel in this garden needs a bit of attention, but the concrete paving stones are very easy to sweep and keep looking pristine.

Don't have too many containers. Plants in pots need watering, feeding and repotting – far better just to put plants straight into the ground.

Practise 'right plant, right place'. If you locate plants where they will be happy, there will be less need to intervene, and you will save yourself time and money.

Choose plants that have a long season of interest, for example, trees that change colour in autumn, or grasses that hold their shape in winter. A garden that includes evergreens will retain its structure and look good all year round.



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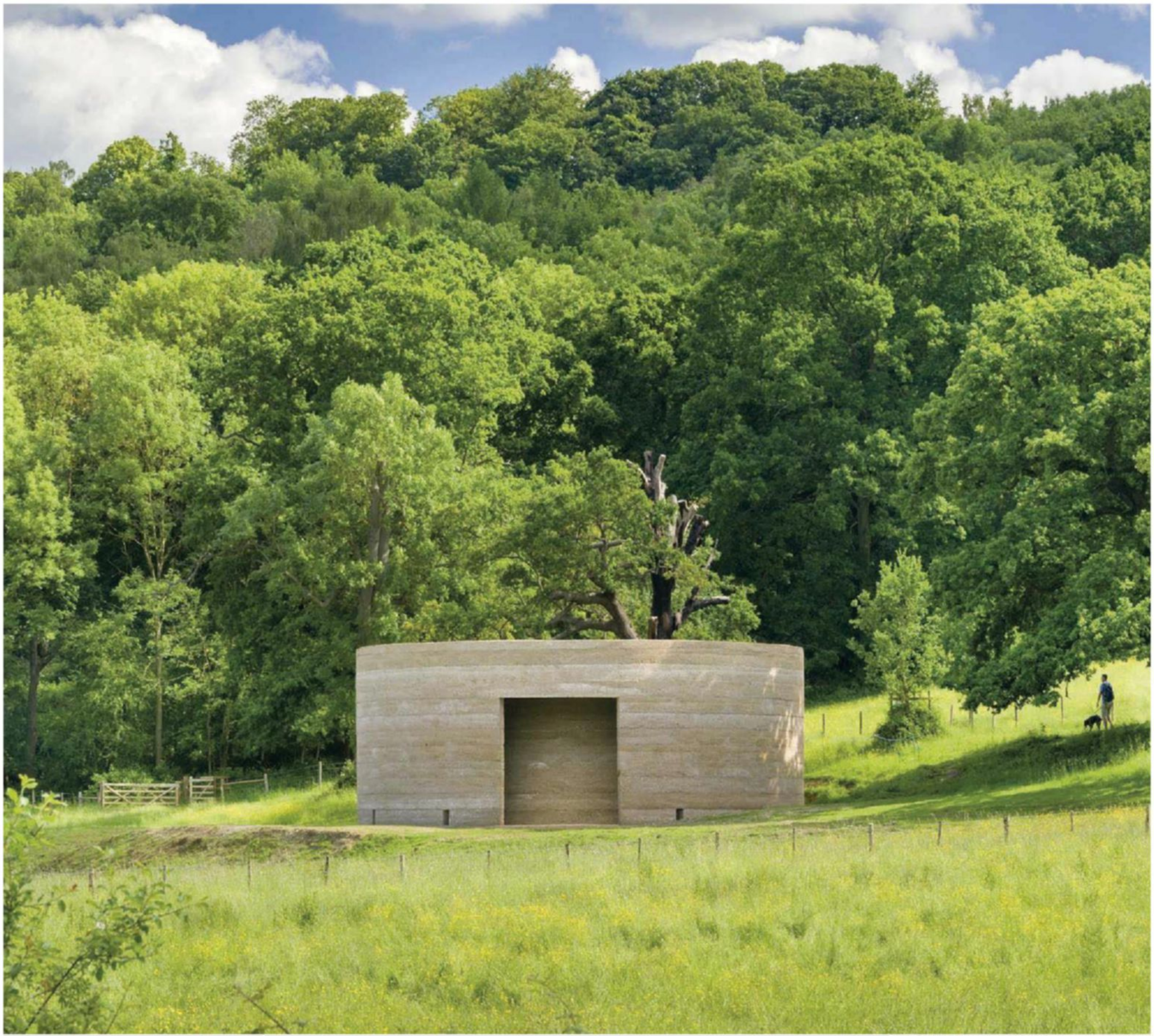
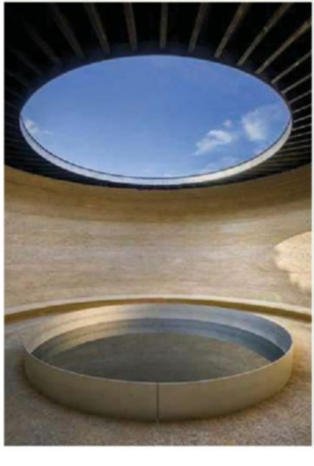
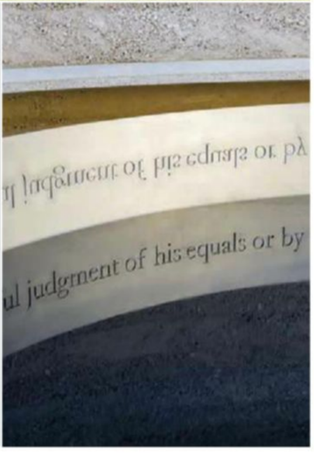




REFLECTING ON HISTORY

Writ in Water, a simple but powerful circular building, designed by Mark Wallinger in collaboration with Studio Octopi, has become the second major artwork to be installed at Runnymede, Surrey, the site of the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. Commissioned by the National Trust, the rammed earth building provides an immersive experience for contemplation and reflection. At its centre is a light filled chamber, which visitors enter via a circular labyrinth, where the sky is reflected through an oculus on to a circular pool of water. An inscription around the stainless steel, inner rim of the pool, which can be read reflected in the water, bears the words of Clause 39 of the Magna Carta: 'No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land.' Open daily. **nationaltrust.org.uk/runnymede**



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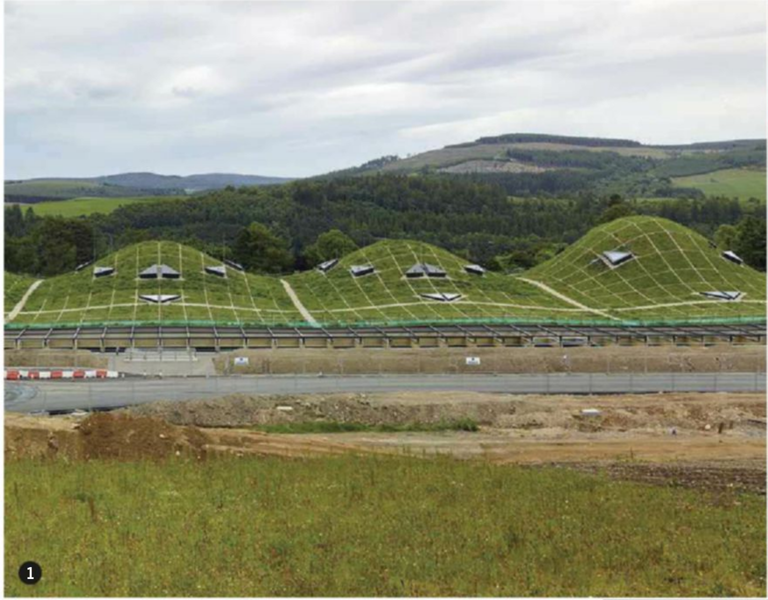
NEWS

COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI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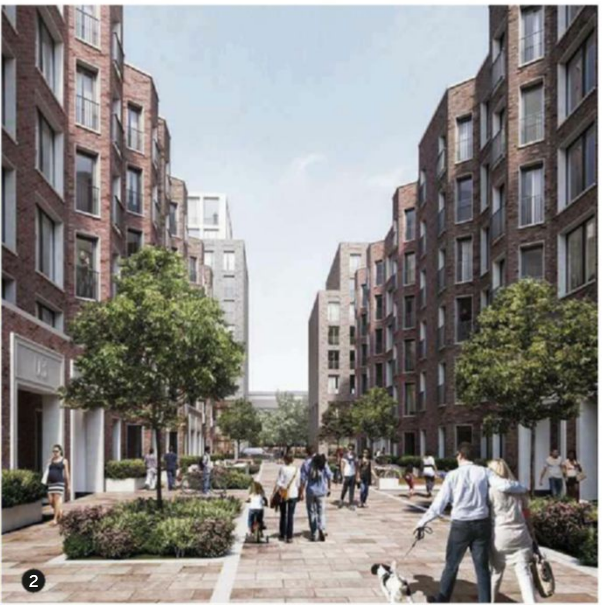
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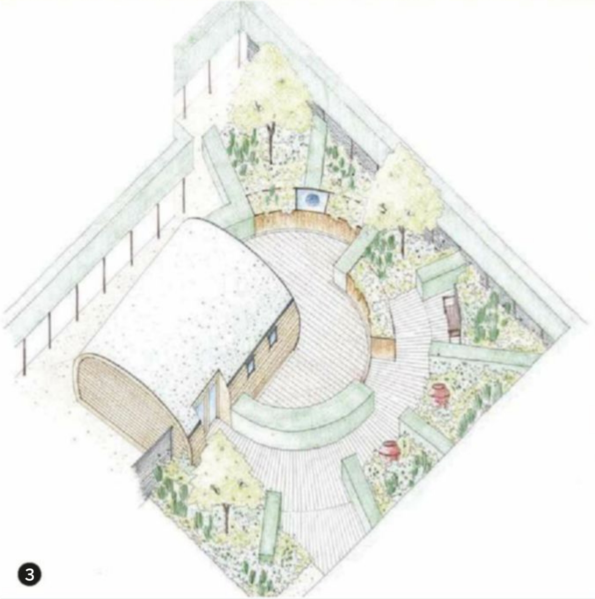
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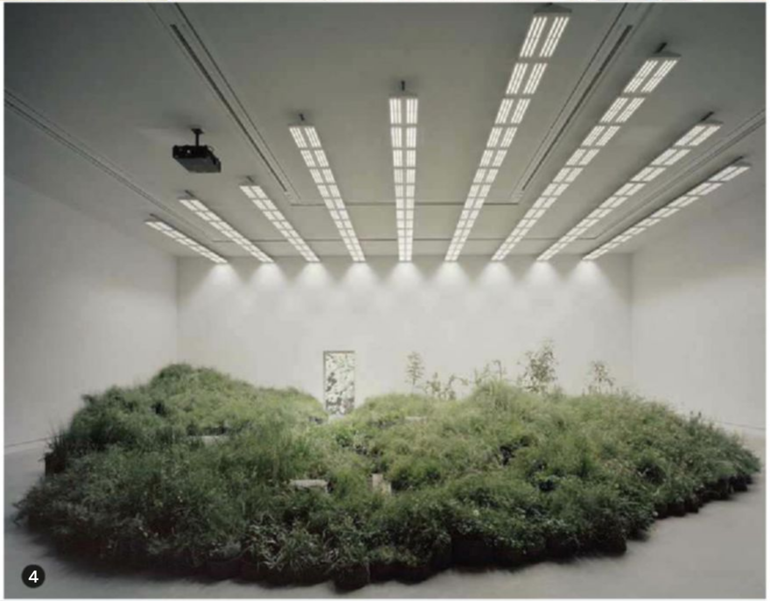
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① MACALLAN DISTILLERY

The public can now visit the striking contemporary Macallan whisky distillery, designed by Rogers Stirk Harbour and Partners and landscaped by Gillespies. The distillery is cut into the rolling Speyside landscape at Easter Elchies, northeast Scotland, amid farmland used for growing barley, and takes its cue from ancient Scottish earthworks. The four vast distillery tanks are hidden under an undulating green roof – said to be one of the most complicated roof structures in the world – which is planted with a meadow of Scottish wildflowers. **rsh-p.com/projects/the-macallan-distillery**

② CANADA WATER MASTERPLAN

Planning permission has been submitted for a new development of homes, shops, offices and cafés with public squares and community gardens on a 50-acre stretch of London's Rotherhithe peninsula at Canada Water. The masterplan by Townshend Landscape Architects replaces the old Surrey Quays shopping centre and provides a network of streets and lanes. Water will become an important amenity with walkable routes and cycle paths connecting the buildings to the Thames. 'Biodiversity corridors' will help wildlife move between parks in the wider area. **alliesandmorrison.com**

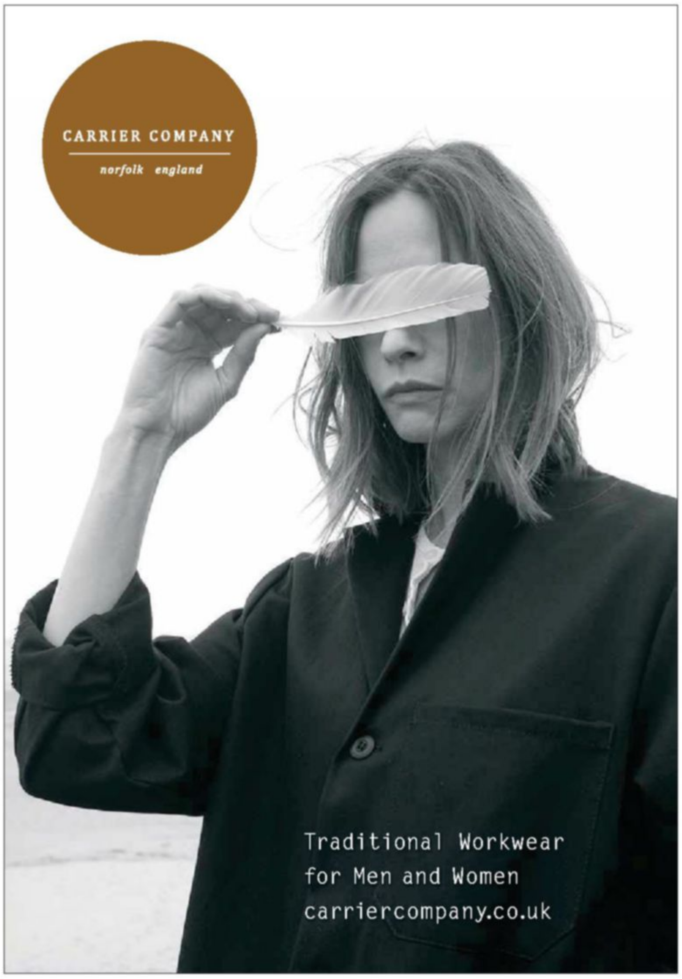
③ TIME GARDEN

A curvilinear timber garden room, made by Green Unit, is the centrepiece of the recently opened Time Garden, at the Palliative Care Unit at Colchester General Hospital. Designed by Paul Baines, the garden fans around the building, which accommodates a hospital bed and seating, so patients can be in the garden whatever the weather. Clipped box hedges divide the drift-planting like the hours of a clock, with plants including *Penstemon* 'Evelyn', *Veronicastrum virginicum* 'Lavendelturm' and *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster'. Three *Catalpa bignonioides* 'Aurea' spread a golden canopy over the space. **paul-baines.com**

④ VENICE BIENNALE

The Australian Pavilion at the 16th Venice Architecture Biennale, houses a bold installation of 10,000 plants, including 65 Western Plains grassland species. Entitled 'Repair', the exhibit draws attention to the destruction of the indigenous grasslands of southeast Victoria, where only one per cent of the grasslands that existed at the time of European settlement now remain. The plants spill out into the Giardini gardens, drawing visitors inside. Creators Baracco and Wright Architects and artist Linda Tegg, hope it will encourage architects to think about how buildings impact on the natural world. Until 25 November. **labiennale.org**

1 MARK POWER / MAGNUM PHOTOS. COURTESY OF ROGERS STIRK HARBOUR + PARTNERS; 2 ALLIES AND MORRISON; 3 PAUL BAINES; 4 RORY GARDINER



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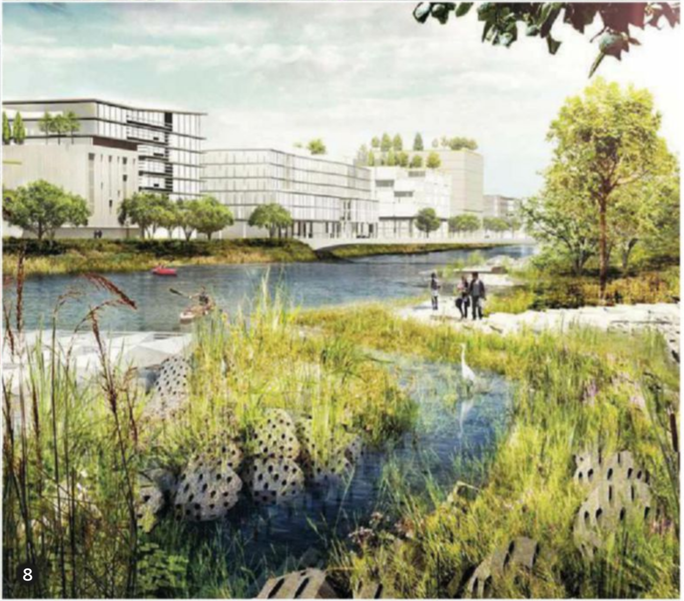

⑤ DAN PEARSON IN CHINA

Dan Pearson has revealed his landscaping and planting at Amanyangyun, a luxury resort southwest of Shanghai. The 100-acre development for Aman Resorts, consists of private villas, a hotel and new and re-constructed antique merchant's houses. The project stems from Shanghai philanthropist Ma Dadong's rescue of some 10,000 mature camphor trees, plus houses, relocated to the site from a valley in Jiangxi province to make way for a dam. Dan's planting of mainly Chinese species, combines a multi-stemmed layer of flowering trees, above an airy ground floor. **danpearsonstudio.com**

⑥ CIVIC TRUST AWARD

A new Buddhist retreat, based on the design of a traditional Suffolk barn, has won a Civic Trust award for its architecture. The Vajrasana Buddhist Centre in Walsham-le-Willows was designed by architects Walter and Cohen, with landscape design by Bradley-Hole Schoenaich Landscape. The Triratna Buddhist retreat embraces three inner gardens, each with a distinctive character, which are places for meeting and meditating, with views to the open landscape beyond. They include a visitor's garden, a courtyard water garden and a dry stupa courtyard with seating. **civictrustawards.org.uk**

⑦ GLASSHOUSE RESTORATION

Four late-Victorian glasshouses, built by Foster & Pearson for The Walled Nursery at Hawkhurst, Kent, have been painstakingly restored re-using original materials, including the glass panes and cast iron supports. The restoration of the Carnation, Cucumber, Pelargonium and Hot Houses, has replaced the original wooden frameworks with frames made from Accoya, a long-lasting modified softwood that has the durability of a hardwood. The renovation work was made possible by a generous donation from the granddaughter of the original head gardener, Ernest Hardcastle. **thewallednursery.co.uk**

⑧ ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

With much of the San Francisco Bay area susceptible to flooding as a result of climate change, the city has held a year-long design challenge to come up with innovative fixes. One solution is The South Bay Sponge, a project by Field Operations Team, which proposes a collection of absorbative landscapes for collecting, filtering and dispersing flood water along 20 miles of shoreline. It includes the restoration of inter-tidal marshlands and salt ponds, and establishing new wetlands and floodable parks and green spaces. **resilientbayarea.org**

5 DAN PEARSON STUDIO; 6 THE WALLED NURSERY; 7 MAXINE SIMMONDS; 8 JAMES CORNER FIELD OPERATIONS

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE
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monitoring tree health

Top and left Sirococcus blight of cedar
Middle Oriental chestnut gall wasp
Bottom Chalara ash dieback

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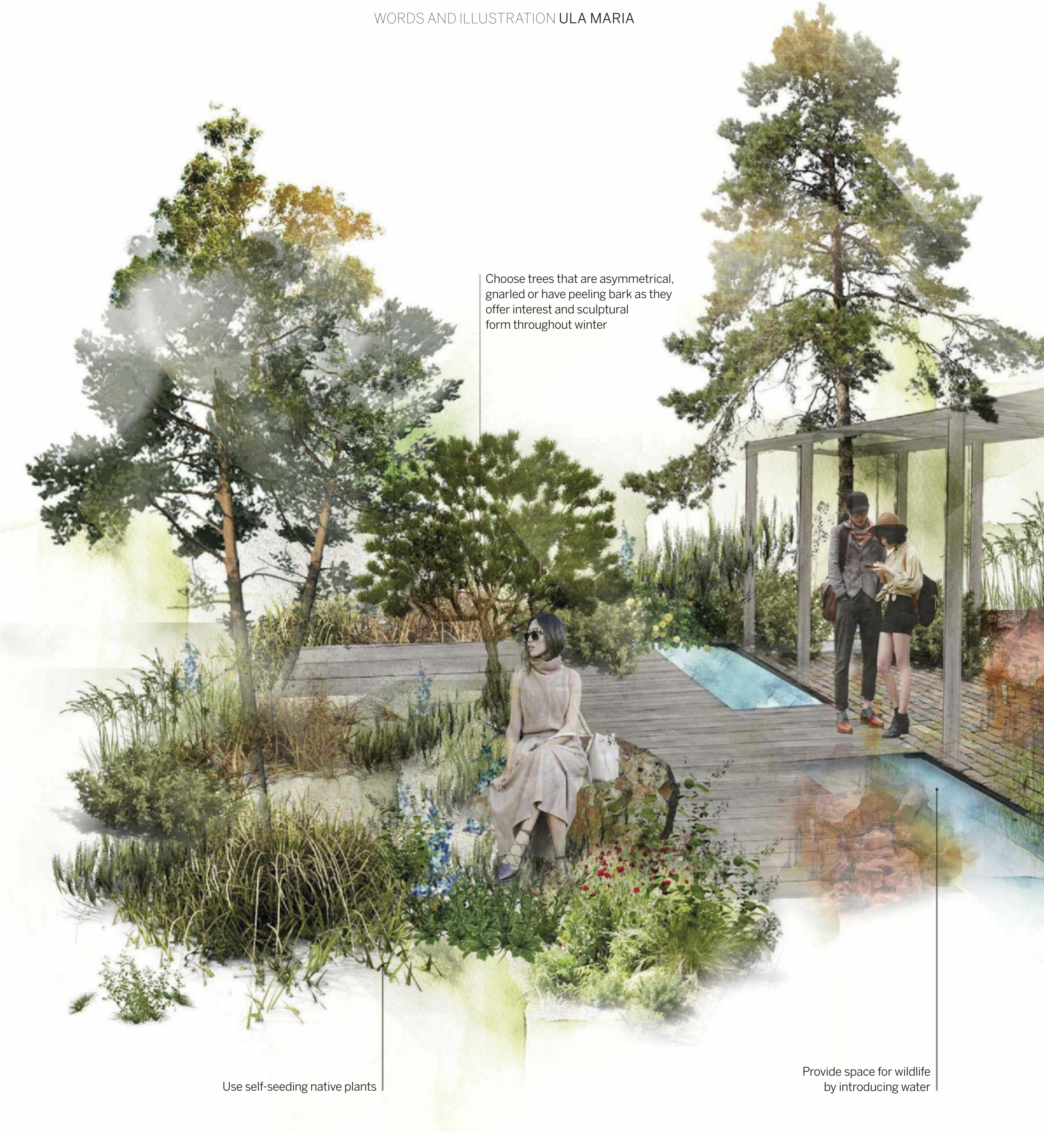
Observatree is a citizen science project led by Forest Research, in collaboration with key organisations. Previously 50% funded by the EU's LIFE+ Programme (2013-2017)

THE BEAUTY OF IMPERFECTION

In this second feature of the series, RHS Young Designer of the Year Ula Maria encourages us to embrace imperfection in the garden, in the spirit of wabi-sabi

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION **ULA MARIA**



Choose trees that are asymmetrical, gnarled or have peeling bark as they offer interest and sculptural form throughout winter

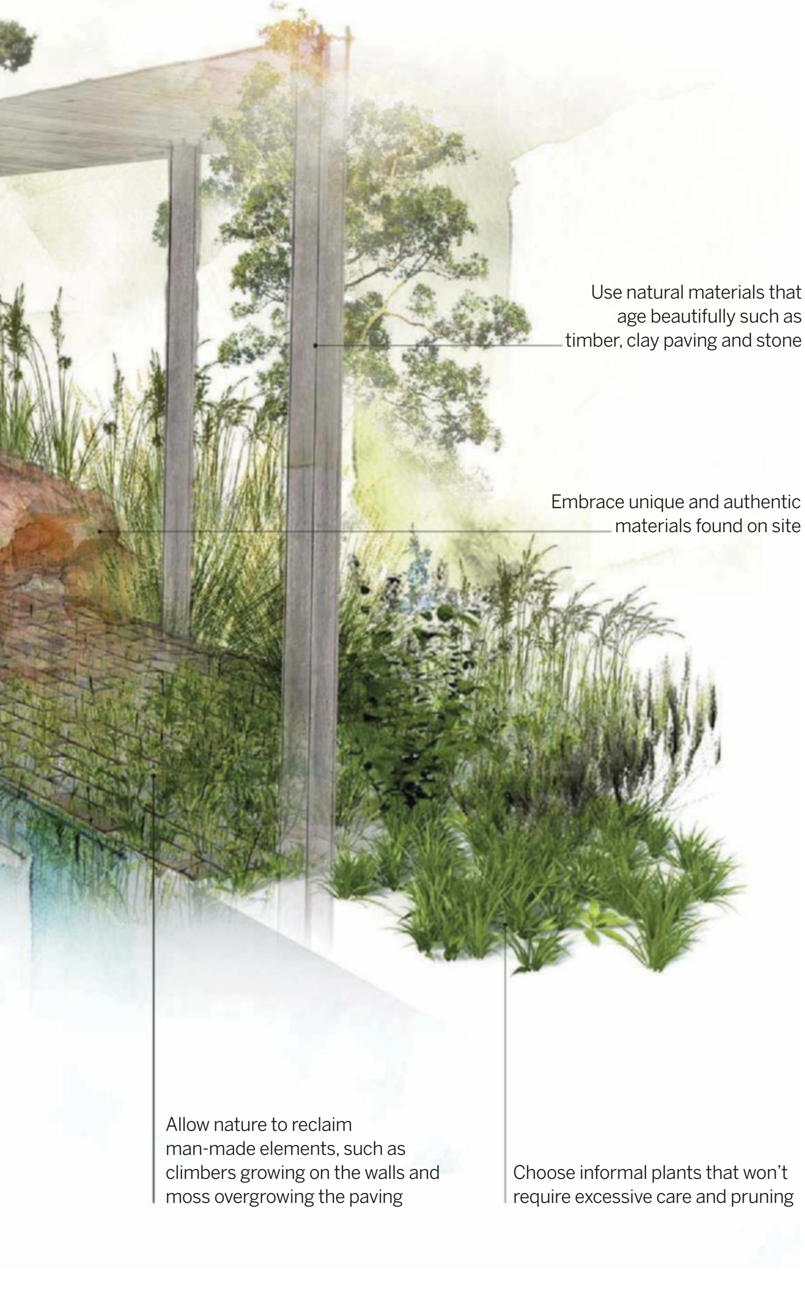
Use self-seeding native plants

Provide space for wildlife by introducing water

Ula Maria
is an award-winning garden designer, landscape architect and illustrator. She was named the RHS Young Designer of the Year in 2017.

Some days I walk into my garden after having been away for a while, to be greeted by overgrown grasses, a few lifeless flowers and a couple of weeds, proudly poking their heads above the rest of the planting. It's almost as if they are laughing at me, saying: "We are in charge now!" On such days my garden doesn't look as though it could ever belong on the pages of a magazine such as this, and it is certainly a far cry from the flawless gardens on the Main Avenue of an RHS Flower Show. But once I start to notice how much the gnarled pine has grown since I last saw it, or that a grass has flowered for the first time, or I smell the delicious aroma of freshly sprouting herbs that have self-seeded, the garden's imperfections begin to fade. The silent magnificence of the garden that has been patiently waiting to be noticed, exceeds all. Like every form of life, gardens are ever-changing. They grow and decay, developing their unique marks and cracks throughout time. Impeccable, flawless, clear-cut nature doesn't exist, and the ancient Japanese philosophy of *wabi-sabi* is a celebration of that. Instead, it focuses on finding beauty in imperfection, celebrates the passing of time, and demonstrates how to create a garden that will look just as serene and beautiful in winter as it does in summer.

Take inspiration from the wider landscape surrounding the garden



Use natural materials that age beautifully such as timber, clay paving and stone

Embrace unique and authentic materials found on site

Allow nature to reclaim man-made elements, such as climbers growing on the walls and moss overgrowing the paving

Choose informal plants that won't require excessive care and pruning

WHAT IS WABI-SABI?

Wabi-sabi is an art form and for many it is a way of life. It means to be humble and to be truly oneself without any pretence. Directly, *wabi* translates to 'being modest' and *sabi* to 'the bloom of time'. But these two short words have so much more depth and meaning hidden behind them than what their direct translation first tells us. *Wabi-sabi* is the appreciation of the natural processes that are inevitable over time. It may come through the crack in the aged timber sleeper, the rust on the vintage chair, or the moss overgrowing the stone water feature. It is nature's manifestation of the ability to reclaim all that is immersed in it. *Wabi-sabi* is also an appreciation of craftsmanship and a rejection of mass production, where each element of the garden is carefully considered and realised as a piece of art in itself. However, it isn't about making a statement, but rather finding the balance where everything works harmoniously together.

> *WABI-SABI IS THE APPRECIATION OF NATURAL PROCESSES THAT ARE INEVITABLE OVER TIME*

CRAFTSMANSHIP OVER MASS PRODUCTION

Wabi-sabi is the celebration of beautifully crafted clay pots, handmade tiles, carefully sculpted stone features and carved timber elements and doesn't leave room for uniform plastic or fibreglass. Primarily, all naturally occurring materials that can be formed into beautiful and purposeful pieces are favoured over the mass-produced ones. These are materials destined to wear and age gracefully, developing in character and therefore value, rather than simply becoming unusable. Every material we borrow from nature, nature eventually claims back (unlike the plastics that have slowly sneaked into our gardens, which are easily replaceable but not biodegradable). With its principles of consuming less, and appreciating imperfections more, *wabi-sabi* is more relevant to our lives now than ever before.

Asymmetry, simplicity and irregularity are all inseparable parts of *wabi-sabi*. Each element should be meaningful, rather than artificial, and should represent its own story. It reminds us that nature isn't perfect, nor should it be. The asymmetrical tree ▷

▷ might tell us that it didn't get enough sunlight where it was planted, which has resulted in it being this particular authentic shape. The moss reclaiming the stepping stones and colouring them in shades of green, represents ageing and the garden becoming a part of a wider landscape. In a way, it is nature accepting the elements that we propose to it, by turning them into a sustainable landscape. Materials that have been artificially treated and mass-produced don't fit, as they don't tell us the story of the particular space they have occupied and become a part of.

NOTHING LASTS, NOTHING IS PERFECT

The mantra of *wabi-sabi* is: 'Nothing lasts, nothing is finished and nothing is perfect.' These three principles are often in contradiction and contrast to many of the gardens we see at flower shows. The absence of bare ground, wilting flowers or muddy stepping stones can give us a false sense of what gardens should look like all year round. Following the principles of *wabi-sabi* frees us from such expectations and allows freedom for change, evolution and meaningfulness. When creating a *wabi-sabi* space, either within your garden, home, or workplace, ask yourself the questions: 'Is it useful? Is it beautiful? Is it meaningful?'

There are other principles that embody the spirit of *wabi-sabi*, such as taking inspiration from and working in sync with the wider landscape that surrounds, or once surrounded, the garden, which will result in a more harmonious, balanced space. Allowing nature to reclaim man-made elements within the garden, such as climbers growing up walls or moss overgrowing paving, is also in the spirit of *wabi-sabi*, as is finding and embracing the most characterful features of the garden, which will bring authenticity and uniqueness to the space.

Asymmetrical and gnarled trees or those with peeling bark trees will still offer interest and sculptural form when their leaves have fallen. Allowing native and informal plants to self-seed will provide a naturalistic and sustainable base that can evolve and alter over time. One of the advantages of this approach is that it won't demand excessive care and pruning, unlike the extravagant flowers often seen in traditional English gardens. Dashing, flamboyant plants are rarely, if ever, used in *wabi-sabi* gardens as they distract from the aim of creating a serene and harmonious atmosphere.

ALLOWING NATURE TO RECLAIM MAN-MADE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE GARDEN IS WABI-SABI

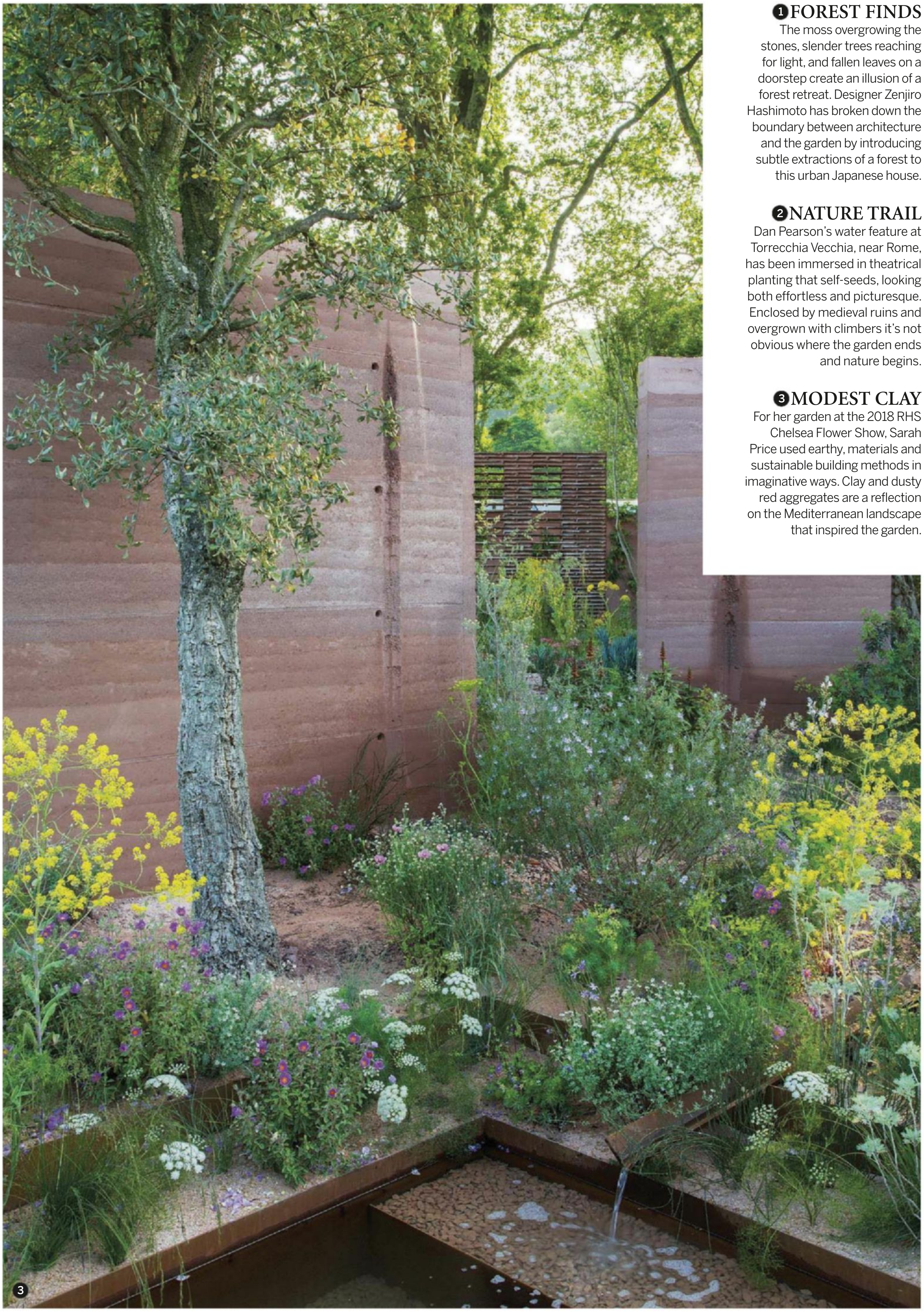
Seedheads are valued for the structure they provide to the late summer garden and are viewed as symbols of time passing, demonstrating that nothing lasts forever. Likewise, natural materials that showcase the 'bloom of time' and age beautifully, and help to embrace the sense of place.

ALLOWING TIME TO DO ITS WORK

More than anything, *wabi-sabi* requires patience, attention to detail and time. It cannot be rushed. It entails true craftsmanship, understanding of materials and appreciation of the imperfections in all the living forms that surround us. Most importantly, it teaches us to listen to and embrace our innate connection with nature, and reveres authenticity above all. Human efforts to achieve perfection will always fall short of nature's magnificence, no matter how hard we try, but through the principles of *wabi-sabi* we can get a little bit closer to working in one with it. ☐

NEXT MONTH Finding balance in the garden.

1 TERUYO NISHIYA / NIWATAN LANDSCAPE; 2 EVA NEMETH; 3 MATTHEW BRUCE / THE GARDEN COLLECTION / FP



❶FOREST FINDS

The moss overgrowing the stones, slender trees reaching for light, and fallen leaves on a doorstep create an illusion of a forest retreat. Designer Zenjiro Hashimoto has broken down the boundary between architecture and the garden by introducing subtle extractions of a forest to this urban Japanese house.

❷NATURE TRAIL

Dan Pearson's water feature at Torrecchia Vecchia, near Rome, has been immersed in theatrical planting that self-seeds, looking both effortless and picturesque. Enclosed by medieval ruins and overgrown with climbers it's not obvious where the garden ends and nature begins.

❸MODEST CLAY

For her garden at the 2018 RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Sarah Price used earthy, materials and sustainable building methods in imaginative ways. Clay and dusty red aggregates are a reflection on the Mediterranean landscape that inspired the garden.

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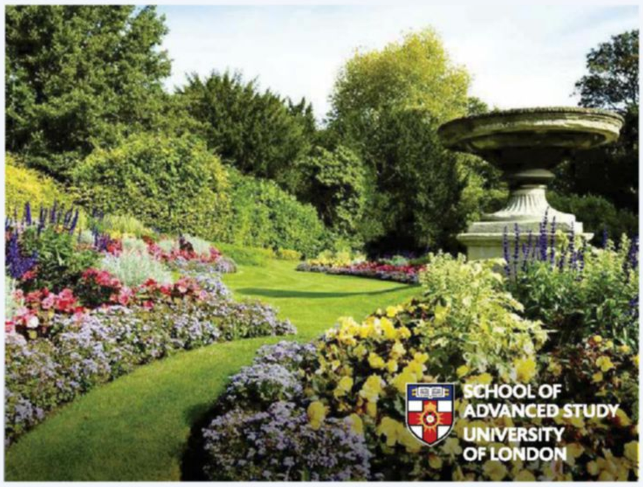

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Venues include: *Arvensis Perennials (Wilts); Bury Court (Hants.); The Coach House (Glos); Easton Walled Garden (Lincs); Forde Abbey (Dorset); Hunting Brook Gardens (Eire); Larch Cottage (Cumbria); Parham House (W. Sussex); Scampston Walled Garden (Yorks); Sheffield Botanical Garden (Yorks); Stillingfleet Lodge (Yorks); Trentham Estate Gardens (Staffs); Walled Garden Treberfydd (Powys); Waterperry Gardens (Oxon); Yeo Valley Gardens (Som).*

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IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK

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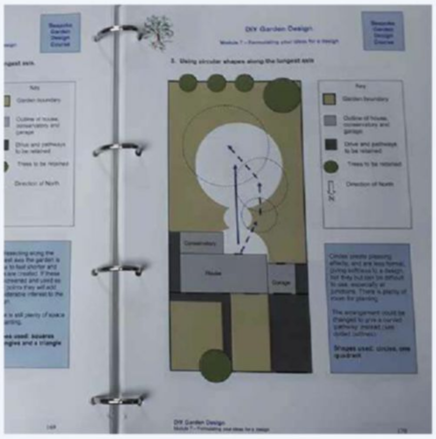

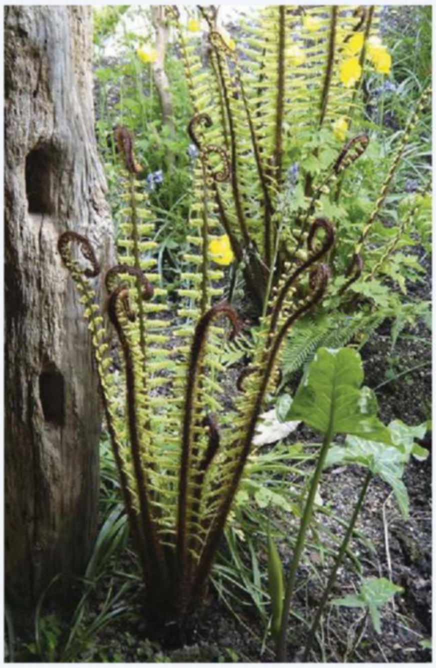

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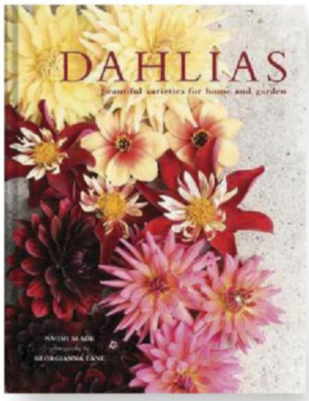
DOWNTOOLS

Book reviews, crossword, back issues

A current favourite with gardeners and florists, *Dahlia* 'Café au Lait' is one of the many cultivars featured in Naomi Slade's new book *Dahlias*, reviewed on page 110.

GEORGIANNA LANE

BOOK REVIEWS



DAHLIAS: BEAUTIFUL VARIETIES FOR HOME AND GARDEN
by Naomi Slade
Photographs by
Georgianna Lane

Pavilion, £25
ISBN 978-1911595250

A celebration of a much-loved garden favourite, which includes a gallery of blooms and offers a straight-forward approach to growing them.

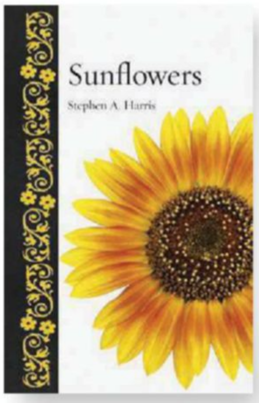
Reviewer Tom Brown is head gardener at Parham House.

Beloved by flower arrangers and gardeners, there is a dahlia to suit us all. Enthusiastically, this book covers how dahlias historically transitioned from the Victorians' obsession, through the less-favoured, more recent showman's blooms, to the popularity of the bronze-leaved and single dahlias of today.

The author simplifies the mystique surrounding classification, beautifully illustrating the comparisons between water lily, decorative, collarette types, among others, with the age-old problem of the difference between a spent bloom and an emerging bud. Overall it is a comprehensive, quick-reference guide to the sometimes-bewildering cultivation and classification of these plants.

The author offers sound advice for those who are looking for dahlias to grow for the first time, however, gardeners who've grown them for many years might find the descriptions of the different cultivars – and the way in which they are organised – a little flowery and vague. For some, the headings of 'fabulous and funky' and 'dramatic and daring' could lack authority. That said, we are informatively led through anatomy, classification and websites of societies offering sources of information – tailed with sound advice in growing these plants well.

This is a visually stunning book with superb photography, which makes it a beautiful experience to turn each page. If you consider yourself reasonably competent in dahlia growing and are looking to increase your knowledge and understanding of this genus, you may be left wanting more. For beginners wishing to grow these magnificent plants for perhaps the first time, this book is a great introduction to the genus.



SUNFLOWERS
by Stephen A Harris

Reaktion Books, £16
ISBN 978-1780239262

An intriguing and fact-filled book looking at the sunflower family, its historical importance and its inspiration for artists.

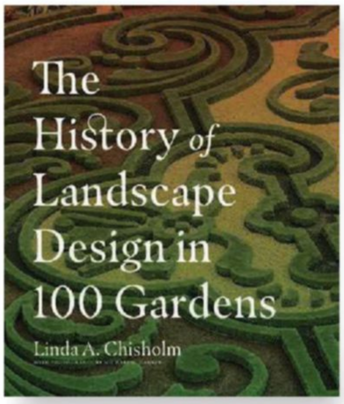
Reviewer John Hoyland is a plantsman and writer.

Even the most devoted plant enthusiast would be hard put to read –let alone research and write – a whole 200-odd-page book about sunflowers. Stephen A Harris's book covers sunflowers and their relatives, known collectively as *Asteraceae*. The family is, I learned, the world's largest group of flowering plants, with nine per cent of the planet's flowering species, and occurs in almost all habitats from the Arctic to Antarctica.

Asteraceae encompasses marigolds, chrysanthemums, daisies, lettuce, thistles and dozens of other familiar plants. The book is a fascinating exploration of the family's biology, ecology and cultural significance. The importance of thistles for the Scots, edelweiss for Austrians and chrysanthemums for the Japanese is described, with often amusing anecdotes and references, such as Mark Twain's dismissal of edelweiss as 'not attractive… not white'.

The totemic member of the family, the sunflower, gets a whole chapter devoted to its transformation from a minor Native American food to a global commodity providing oil, protein and vitamin E. Mathematics also gets a look in: intersecting spirals are seen in the flowerheads of many members of the family and Harris describes how in sunflowers these spirals are most frequently adjacent Fibonacci numbers. He even explains clearly and briefly what Fibonacci numbers are.

The book is part of Reaction Books' 'Botanical' series and is not designed to be tackled in a continuous reading. Rather, it is made to be dipped into, and digested and enjoyed piecemeal. Open the book at any page and you will discover something new, and often surprising, about the sunflower family.



THE HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN IN 100 GARDENS
by Linda A Chisholm

Timber Press, £38.99
ISBN 978-1604695298

An excellent book on garden history, taking you on a fascinating visual journey from the ninth to the 21st century.

Reviewer Annie Guilfoyle is a garden designer and writer.

Author Linda Chisholm lectures at the New York Botanical Garden, her subject being the history of landscape design. Her lifelong interest in the human relationship with the landscape and how this has shaped our natural surroundings, led her to research and write this book. In her introduction, Chisholm is quick to point out that, ‘I make no claim that my choices are the world’s one hundred greatest gardens. Great gardens they are, but I selected them to illustrate important moments in the sometimes evolutionary, sometimes revolutionary history of garden and landscape design.’

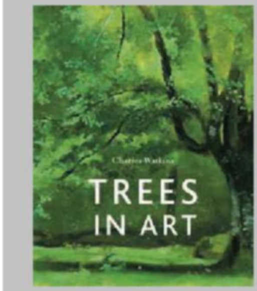
Throughout the book the author illustrates how landscape design was clearly linked to people and historical events. It includes gardens from all over the world, and over 15 chapters we travel from the ninth century to the 21st century. Chisholm claims to have visited almost every garden included for her research. By chapter eight, we are into the 18th century and from this point we see the development of the history of American gardens and the stories of the influential people behind them.

Every garden is well represented in photographic form – most of the images taken by landscape and nature photographer Michael Garber. This makes it very accessible for those who might prefer to dip in and out of the book. The final chapter includes a list of Chisholm’s sources and further reading; useful to those wanting to study a particular garden further.

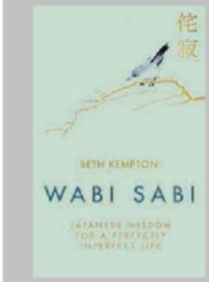
The book would be particularly interesting for those studying the subject of garden history and I would say specifically for anyone who wants to learn more about the history of American gardens.

Other books

The best of the rest includes a look at arboreal art, a guide to Sri Lankan flora and an insight into the necessity of bees.



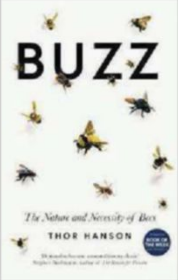
TREES IN ART
by Charles Watkins
Reaktion Books, £35
ISBN 978-1780239309
Filled with paintings, drawings and illustrations, this book celebrates arboreal art through the centuries from Salvador Dalí to David Hockney.



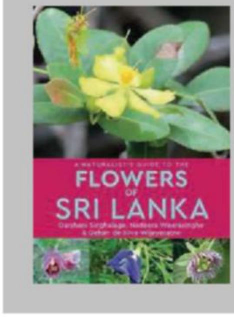
WABI SABI: JAPANESE WISDOM FOR A PERFECTLY IMPERFECT LIFE
by Beth Kempton
Little Brown Book Group, £12.99
ISBN 978-0349421001
Get to grips with the timeless Japanese concept of *wabi-sabi*.

CABINS
TASCHEN

CABINS
by Philip Jodidio
Tashen Books, £45
ISBN 978-3836550260
An exploration into the appeal and use of cabins in all their forms, from a coastal artist studio in Suffolk, to eco-home huts in India.



BUZZ: THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF BEES
by Thor Hanson
Icon Books, £16.99
ISBN 978-1785783746
A detailed history of our relationship with bees and why we need to celebrate and protect them.



A NATURALIST’S GUIDE TO THE FLOWERS OF SRI LANKA
by Darshani Singhalage, Gehan de Silvia Wijeyeratne and Nadeera Weerasinghe
John Beaufoy Ltd, £11.99
ISBN 978-1912081554
A thorough guide with detailed descriptions and photography.

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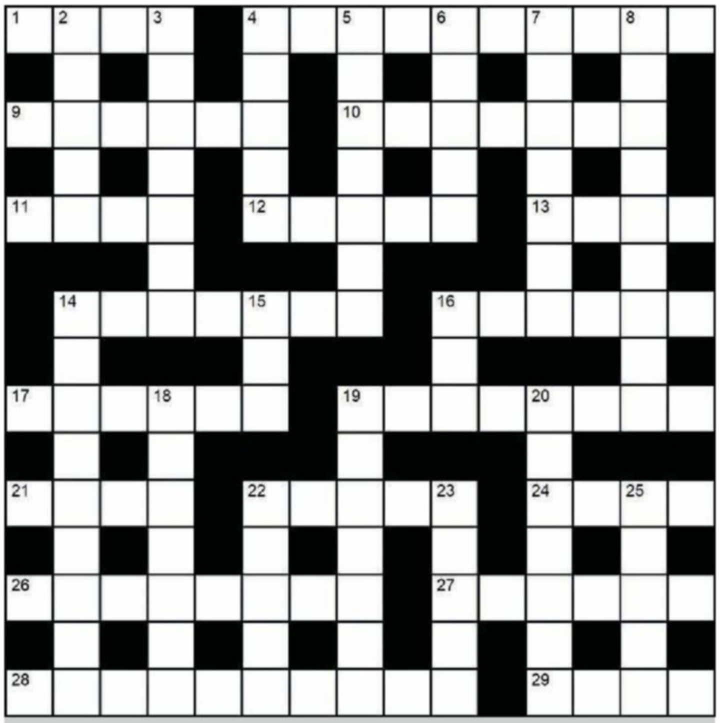
Crossword



ACROSS

1/11 French name of dahlia with red, cactus-like flowers – 'Kitty Black'? (4,4)
4/29 This type of amaryllis is mostly the deadly nightshade genus (10,4)
9 Eg plants grown from cuttings or suckers – left inside conifer fruits (6)
10 Caterpillar that feeds on plant stems – crow with tum upset! (7)
11 See 1 across
12 Narcissus ___ is the lesser daffodil (5)
13 The labella of orchid flowers (4)
14 Herbs such as sage and clary (7)
16 Angelica tree genus – in Guadalajara liana (6)
17 Dark-purple tulip – bee is busy around start of summer (6)
19 Plant family of citrus trees – makes 'a tea cure' (8)
21 Genus of shrubs aka sweet spire – produces one beverage! (4)
22 White-flowering dianthus with a maroon eye – from Henry VIII's house (5)
24 Broad-leaved trees of genus *Ulmus* (4)
26 It might be called wild hyacinth in Scotland (8)
27 Herb of the mint family sounds appetising (6)
28 Genus of plant also called African lily (10)
29 See 4 across

DOWN

2 Sunflower with branching habit – "Hi" (5)
3 Plant's spiral-coiling stem (7)
4 Type of broom not grown in the garden! (5)
5 Genus of eg ragged robin and rose campion (7)
6 Sound of Lady Nancy's daisy-like flower (5)
7 The sensitive fern genus – one local variety, left out (7)
8 Help Naomi to change the genus of hardy annual baby blue eyes (9)
14 Pond plant of *Acorus* genus – eg last few moved (5,4)
15 Hard water! (3)
16 An ornamental allium – displayed in a gallery? (3)
18 Provide support for tall plants (5,2)
19 Reindeer's red-flowering crab apple variety (7)
20 Parsley-like herb, genus *Anthriscus*, found in mulch, er, vile! (7)
22 Prevent plant from flopping – impatiens, maybe, Pam's removed (3,2)
23 Flowers attached to watering-cans? (5)
25 Edible mushroom – or elm, possibly (5)

SOLUTIONS TO THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD WILL BE PRINTED NEXT MONTH

SOLUTIONS TO JULY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Pagoda **4** Spartan **9** Isle **10** Ethel **11** Blue **12** Pink Lady **14** Sucker **15** Magnolia **16** Starch **18** Marrow **20** Tree fern **22** Irises **25** Erysimum **26** Smut **27** Plume **29** Bump **30** Morello **31** Waters.
DOWN: 1 Pastinaca **2** Gherkin **3** Dye **5** Palms **6** Rebecca **7** Azure **8** Chrysanthemum **13** Aglow **16** Seedy **17** Cornus mas **19** Rosette **21** Friable **23** Romeo **24** Sepal **28** Eva.

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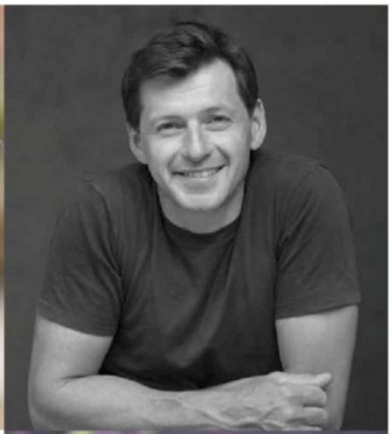

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54
Dianthus
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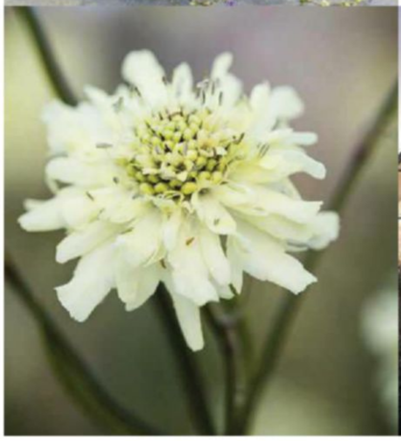
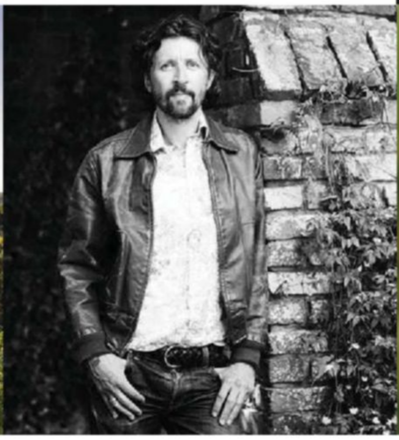
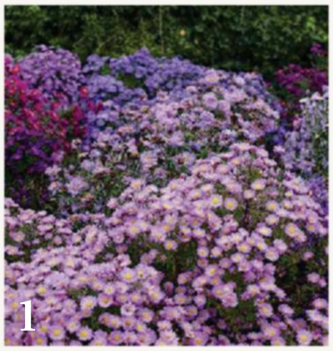




JASON INGRAM, ANDREW MONTGOMERY, CLAIRE TAKACS.

Nursery Collection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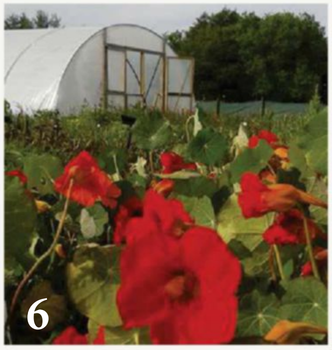
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ORNAMENTAL TREE
NURSERIES
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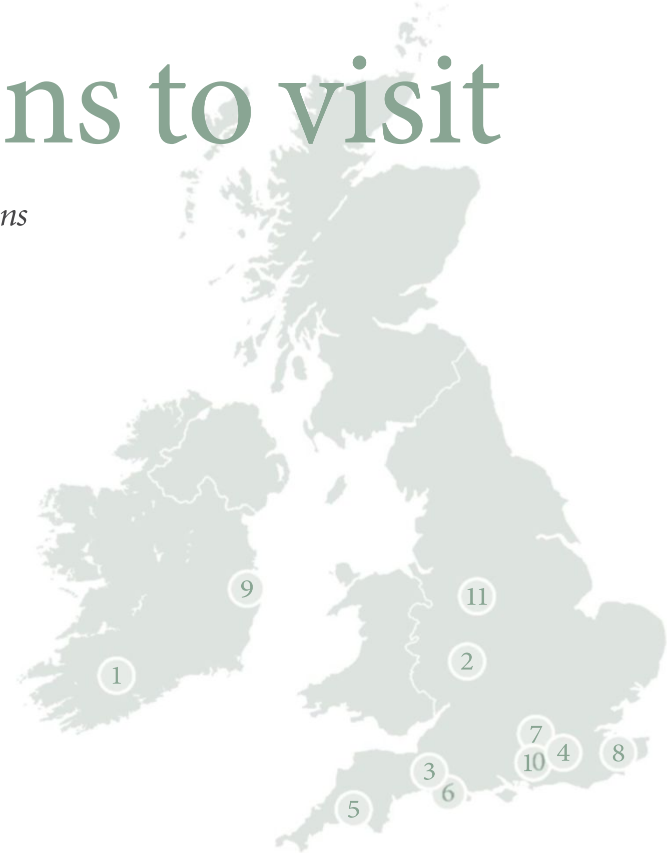

1 BLARNEY CASTLE

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Blarney, Cork, Ireland | blarneycastle.ie | +353 21 438 5252

2 MORTON HALL GARDENS

Enjoy strolling through a romantic rose garden, vibrant potager, majestic rockery, and serene Japanese garden, surrounding an 18th-century manor house on a hilltop. Open 11 August in aid of the Royal Shakespeare Company and 1 September under the National Garden Scheme.

Worcestershire B96 6SJ | mortonhallgardens.co.uk | 01386 791820

3 THE BISHOP'S PALACE & GARDENS

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Wells, Somerset BA5 2PD | bishopspalace.org.uk | 01749 988111

4 HAM HOUSE AND GARDEN

Visit Ham House and Garden in Surrey this summer to enjoy our living exhibition in the Kitchen Garden. "Eat your flowers!" will enable you to taste flowers, learn about their nutritional value and then eat more as ingredients in our tasty Orangery café food.

Ham, Richmond TW10 7RS | nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house-and-garden

5 THE GARDEN HOUSE

The Garden House is an exceptional ten-acre garden on the outskirts of Dartmoor in Devon. It was at the forefront of a revolution in naturalistic planting – creating a kaleidoscope of colour that continues to attract visitors from all over the world. The garden is open every day until the end of October.

office@thegardenhouse.org.uk | thegardenhouse.org.uk

6 SCULPTURE BY THE LAKES

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Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8QU | sculpturebythelakes.co.uk | 07720 637808

7 CHENIES MANOR HOUSE

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cheniesmanorhouse.co.uk | 01494 762888

8 BELMONT HOUSE & GARDENS

Belmont is an elegant 18th-century house, home to six generations of the Harris family. The gardens contain a Pinetum complete with grotto, a Walled Garden, specimen trees and a large Kitchen Garden with Victorian greenhouses, all set in parkland. Gardens open daily.

Throwley, Faversham, Kent ME13 0HH | belmont-house.org | 01795 890202

9 POWERSCOURT HOUSE & GARDENS

Set in the wild Wicklow countryside, Powerscourt Gardens, laid out over two centuries, are world famous and a must-see tourist attraction. Ramble through 47 acres of gardens with beautiful views and natural beauty. Take time to smell the roses and stroll the double herbaceous border in these sublime surroundings.

Enniskerry, County Wicklow, Ireland | powerscourt.net | +353 1 204 6000

10 WOOLBEDING GARDENS

Visit the Vegetable Garden for fragrant lavender and sweet peas that blend with striking vegetables and fruit then explore the 100-year-old hornbeam tunnel for a secluded experience beside the babbling of the river Rother. Open Thursdays and Fridays, booking is essential to visit this hidden gem.

nationaltrust.org.uk/woolbeding-gardens | 0344 249 1895

11 HADDON HALL

Haddon Hall's magnificent gardens are renowned for their roses, structure and views, and are arranged in a series of terraces, retained by enormous buttressed stone walls that cascade down to the River Wye. Open to the public until October, visitors will be charmed by Haddon's romantic English garden.

Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1LA | haddonhall.co.uk | 01629 812855

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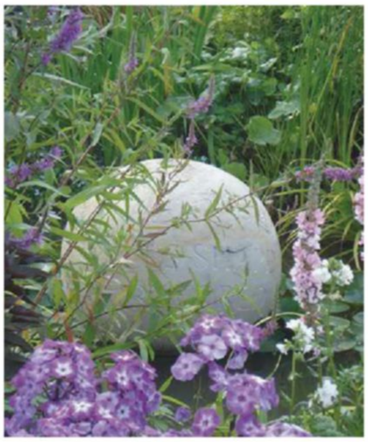

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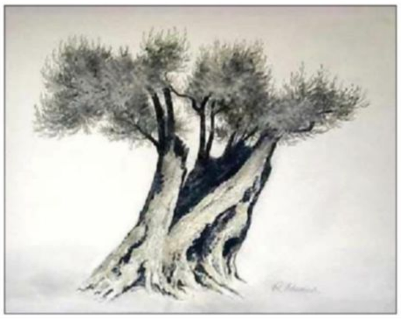

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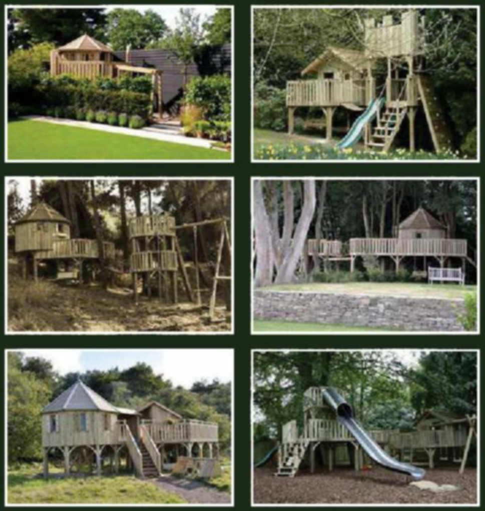

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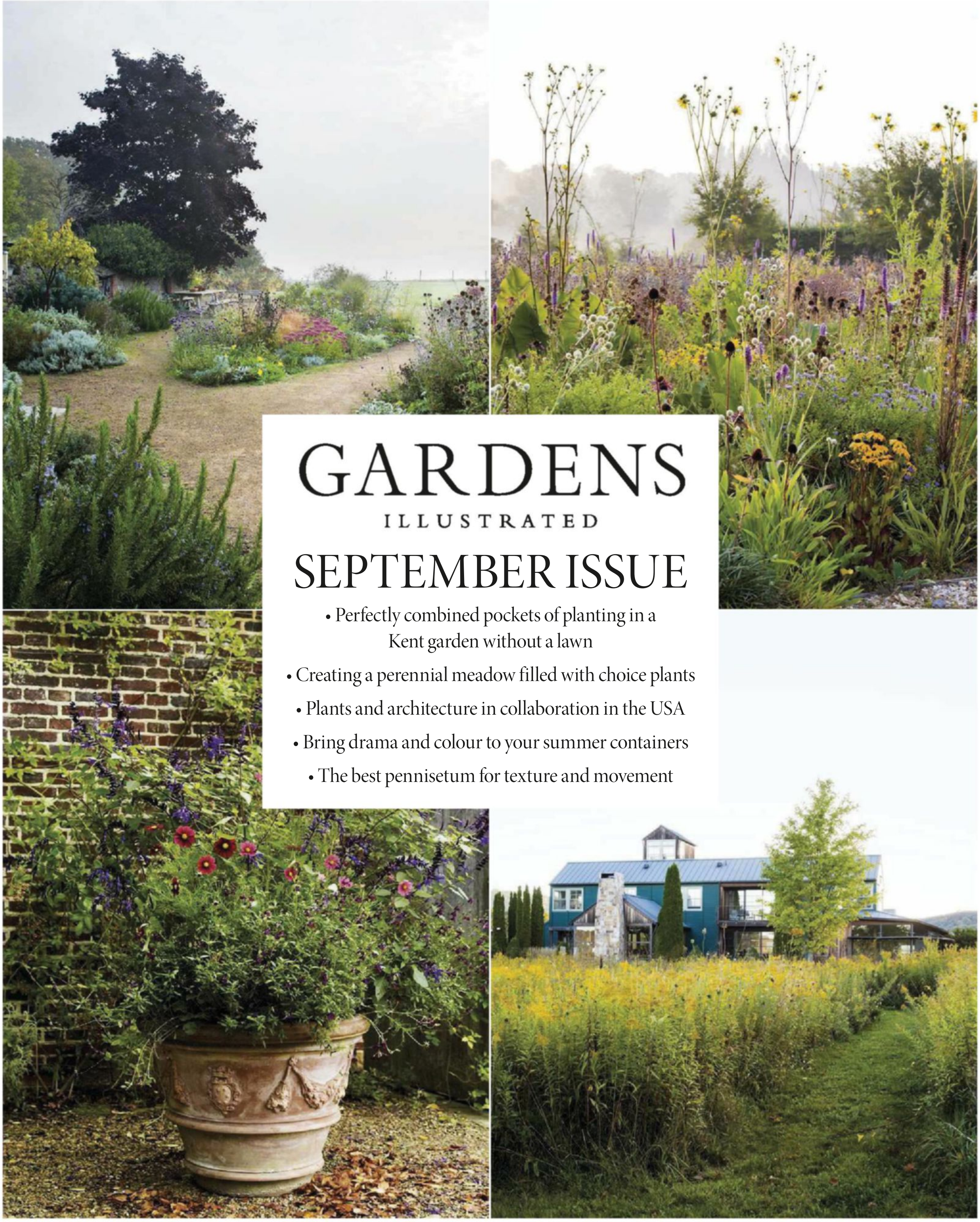

GARDENS
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SEPTEMBER ISSUE

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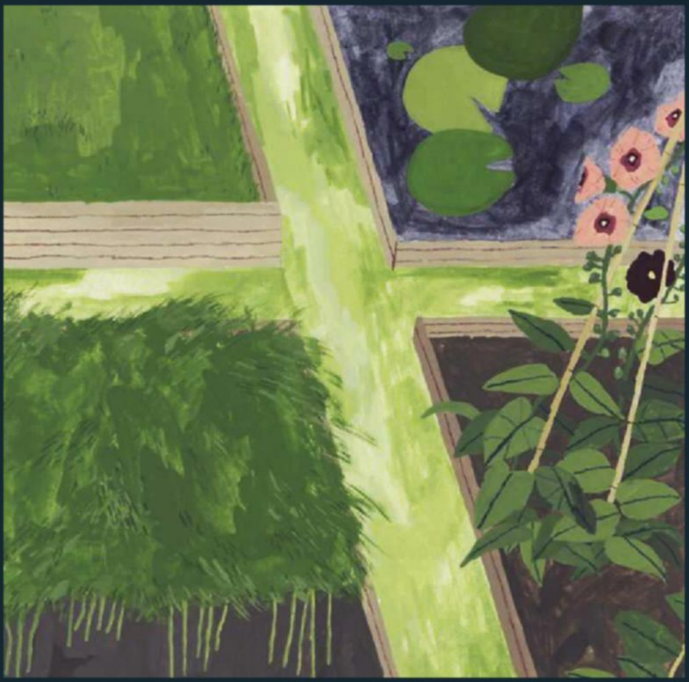
WRITER'S PLOT

RAISING EXPECTATIONS

With the benefit of hindsight Frank can see clearly how his raised lawn can become a thing of perfection, but will that make the rest of the garden impoverished by comparison?

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **RACHEL VICTORIA HILLIS**



Not long after this garden began a builder friend who was gutting a large house in Kennington said that I could have all the joists, if I could take them away. Luckily, my new next door neighbour and subsequent old friend was then in possession of a flat-bed lorry and, two trips to London later, we were in possession of an enviable stash of lumber. It has been used for building sheds and making potting benches and raising and edging beds and to contain the raised lawn.

IT IS BETTER TO TRUST YOUR FUTURE SELF TO KNOW BETTER THAN TO TRUST YOUR PRESENT SELF TO BE INFALLIBLE

It wasn't my intention to have a lawn at all, but I soon realised that unsupervised guests would, with no shorn grass to park their ends on, flop their unseeing posteriors on the meadow and make orchid carnage. There were four square vegetable beds in the original plan. In reality the last one would become the pond; the second has become a stock bed and the third is about to be an asparagus bed. The nearest was the first to deviate from the blueprint, doubling in height to become the raised lawn.

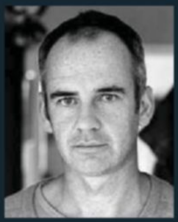
It has been a success. Though only ten foot by ten, it can accommodate a phenomenal number of loungers, with those on the periphery able to dangle their sandalled legs over the edge. A judicious drinks tray placed in the centre will keep the well-meaning out of your hair for a good hour's kitchen time. For a couple of years some persistent hornets made a home in the rubble at the core of the structure, from which they made painful objections to my mowing of it, but were eventually dissuaded with petrol and a match. The mowing itself, while no bother to me, was a bit tricky because of lifting the mower up, and of balancing the wheels on the very edge to do the perimeter.

So, during the exile, it became a little thistley and tummocky without regular attention. It was evident that it needed scalping and returfing. The wooden walls were also becoming slightly rocking with age. In the sheds and in the benches, those joists will see me out, silvering quicker than I do, but untreated and in contact with soil they were never going to last long. Fifteen years isn't bad. If I hadn't taken them they would have been burnt. They were probably cut from virgin forest in Oregon a hundred and fifty years ago; better for them to rot gently into my earth untreated than to add to the carbon dioxide in the air and the god-knows-what chemicals in my soil.

The experiment has been made for very little trouble and no expense. I recommend, if you have a brilliant and novel idea for your garden, to make a cheap and impermanent version to begin with. Had I made that raised lawn of stone and brick and money at the start, I would be haunted forever by improvements that now seem obvious. It would be insupportably annoying. It is better to trust your future self to know better than to trust your present self to be infallible.

So now, this, my future self, thinks that the walls of the raised lawn will be made of brick. The rubble below will have sand rammed into it so that no hornet would consider making itself comfortable there. The turf will no longer go all the way to the edge, but to a paved border that a mower will run along in an unthinking hurry. There will be a ramp running up one side the width of a mower so the job can be done without first switching the thing off, let alone lifting it or worrying about lifting the wrong way and leaking petrol into the filter.

The only problem with this revision is that in its perfection it will make all the surroundings seem rustic and improvised by comparison. I shouldn't fret. Experience tells me that nothing in this garden remains impeccable for more than a disconcerting moment. Our gardens are disturbingly revealing of ourselves. ☐



Frank Ronan is a novelist who lives and gardens in Worcestershire.

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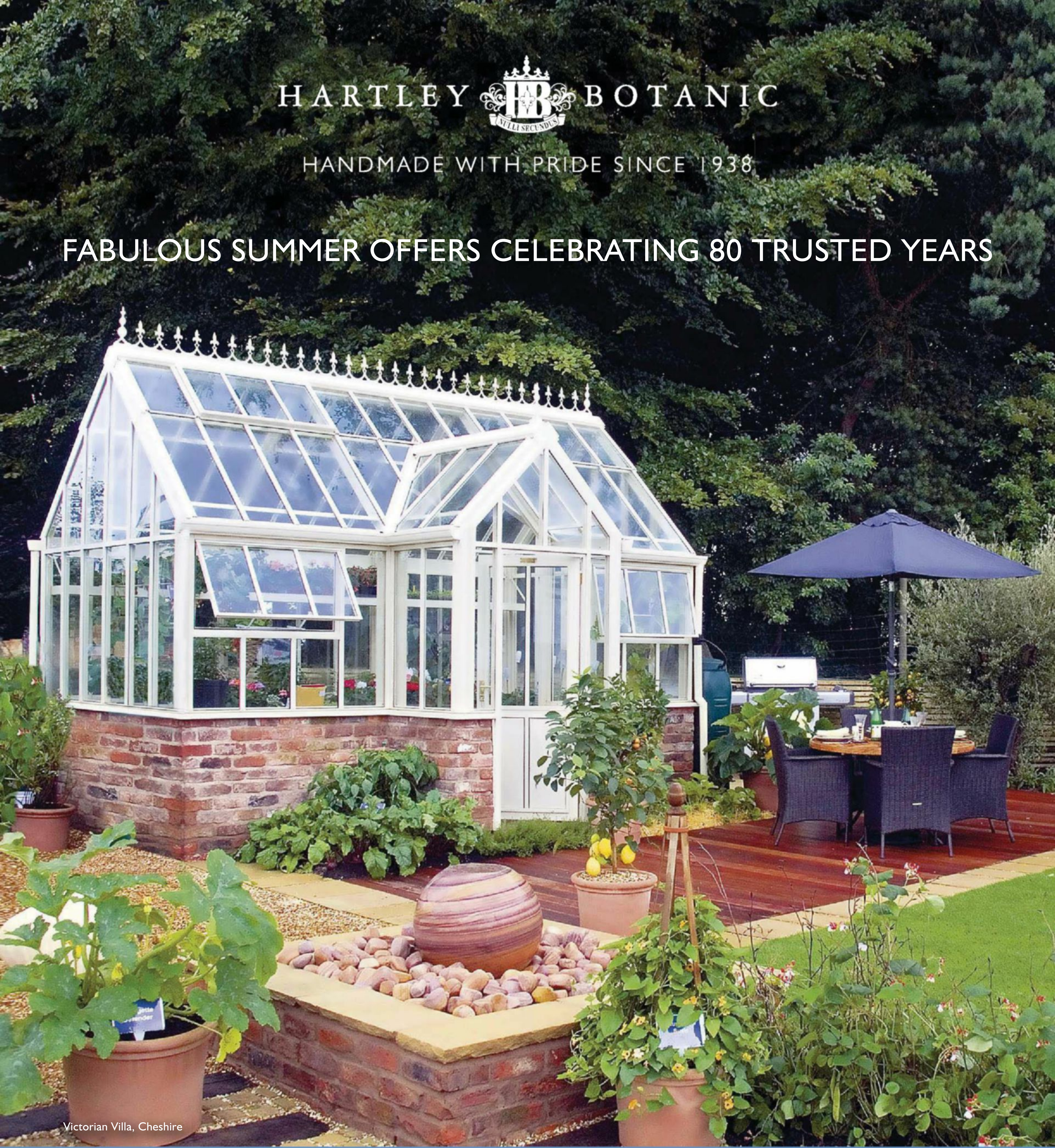
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